THE CAMBRIDGE BIBLE
FOR SCHOOLS & COLLEGES

THE SECOND BOOK OF THE KINGS

EDITED BY
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INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN
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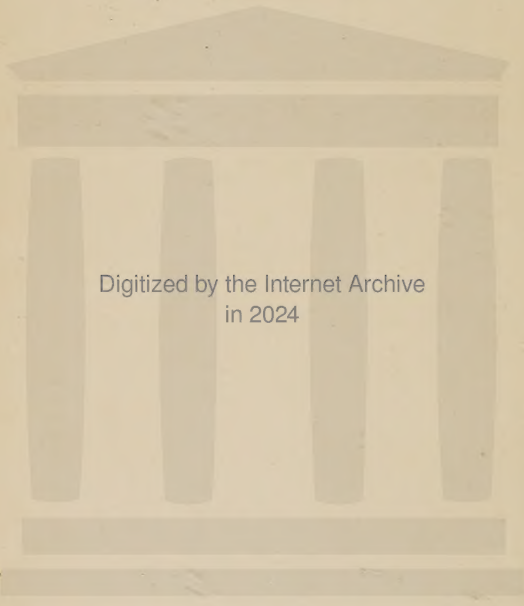

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The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges.

THE SECOND BOOK

OF THE

KINGS.

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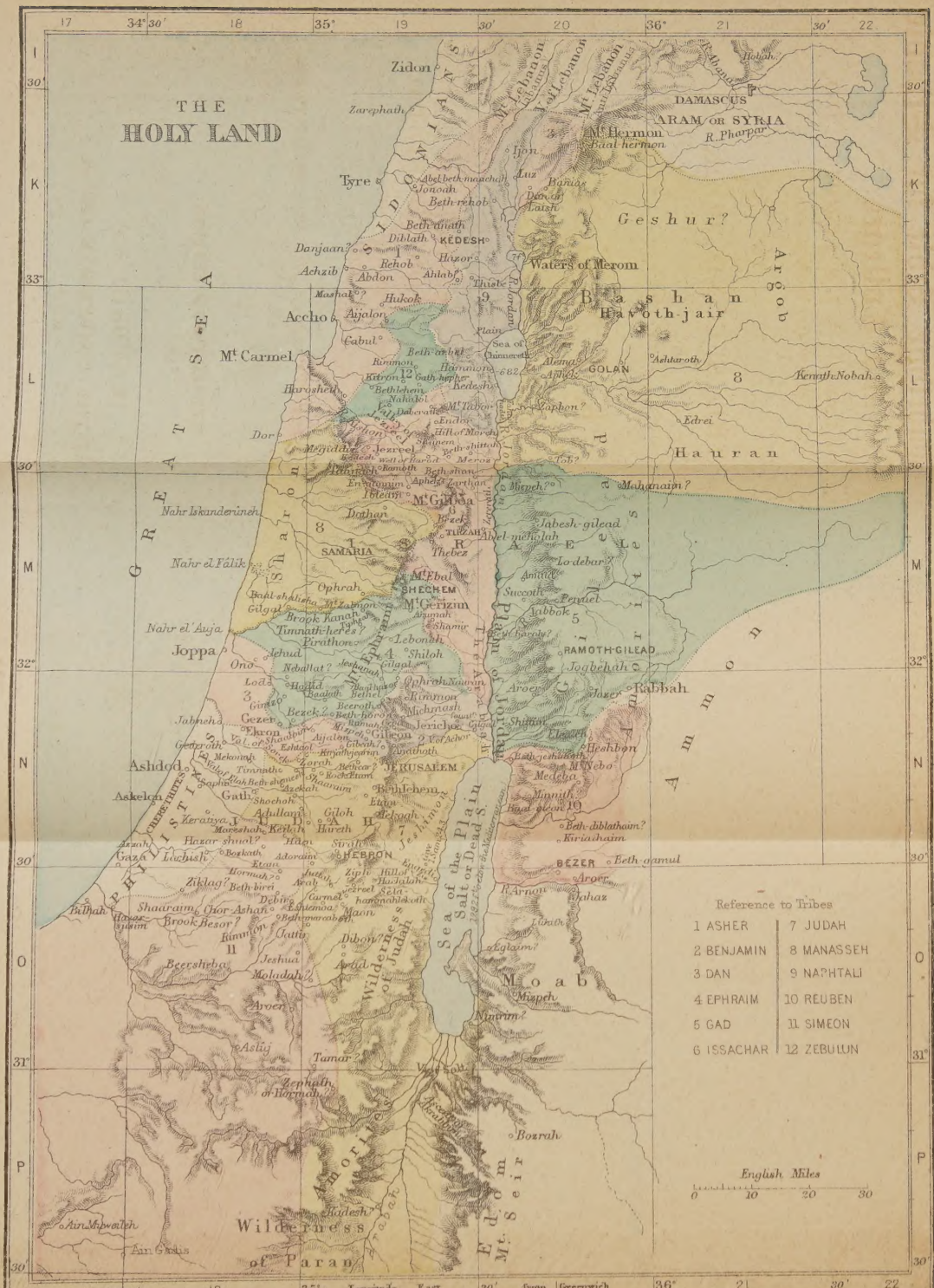
THE
HOLY LAND
GREAT SEA
PHILISTIA
Sharon
Ephraim
Jordan Valley
Gilead
Ammon
Moab
Edom
Mt. Seir
Wilderness of Paran
Wilderness of Judah
Sea of the Plain
Salt or Dead Sea
Mt. Carmel
Mt. Gilboa
Mt. Ebal
Mt. Gerizim
Mt. Hermon
Baal hermon
Mt. Lebanon
Anti Lebanon
Lebanon Mountains
Anti Lebanon Mountains
Waters of Merom
Sea of Chinnereth
Plain
Aroer
Geshur?
Bashan
Havoth-jair
Hauran
GOLAN
DAMASCUS
ARAM or SYRIA
R. Pharpar
R. Abana
Hobah
Zidon
Tyre
Accho
Joppa
Ashdod
Askelon
Gaza
Gath
Ashkelon
JERUSALEM
BETHLEHEM
HEBRON
SHECHEM
SAMARIA
KEDESH
RAMOTH-GILEAD
BEZER
Rabbah
Jabesh-gilead
Mizpeh
Mahanaim?
Succoth
Penuel
Lo-debar
Tabbok
Jogbehah
Aroer
Heshbon
Elealeh
Nebo
Medeba
Minnith
Beth-diblathaim?
Kiriathaim
Ataroth
Kenath
Nobah
Edrei
Ashteroth
Karnaim
Zaphon?
Tabor
Jezreel
Megiddo
Taanach
Ibleam
Dothan
Thebez
Tirzah
Shiloh
Ophrah
Shechem
Timnath-heres?
Pirathon
Lebonah
Jabneh
Ekron
Gezer
Timnah
Zorah
Eshtaol
Kirjath-jearim
Gibeah
Gibeon
Anathoth
Michmash
Jericho
Bethel
Ai
Ramah
Beeroth
Rimmon
Ophrah
Naaman
Aphek
Jokneam
Kishon
Megiddo
Taanach
Ibleam
Jezreel
Hill of Moreh
Beth-shan
Ramoth
Engannim
Jarmuth
Adullam
Socoh
Azekah
Shochoh
Libnah
Eglon
Gederoth
Lachish
Moresheth
Keilah
Hareth
Ziph
Maon
Carmel
Juttah
Eshtemoa
Debir
Hebron
Arad
Aroer
Beersheba
Moladah
Hormah
Ziklag?
Gerar
Besor?
Brook Besor
Shaaraim
Gibeah
Hazar-shual?
Zanoah
Adoraim
Socoh
Azekah
Libnah
Eglon
Lachish
Boscath
Ether
Ashan
Rimmon
Tochen
Ain
Ain Madwerah
Ain Gadis
Kadesh
Zephath or Hormah
Tamar?
Asluj
Bozrah
Dibon
Jahaz
Kedemoth
Mephaath
Beth-jeshimoth
Beth-baal-meon
Beth-jeshimoth
Aroer
Arnon
R. Arnon
Zaphon
Zalmon
Zalmonah
Punon
Oboth
Iim
Iye-abarim
Zered
Brook Zered
Dibon-gad
Almon-diblathaim
Nebo
Pisgah
Abarim
Mt. Nebo
Medeba
Heshbon
Elealeh
Jahaz
Kedemoth
Mephaath
Beth-baal-meon
Beth-jeshimoth
Aroer

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THE SECOND BOOK

OF THE

KINGS,

WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY THE LATE
THE REV. J. RAWSON LUMBY, D.D.
NORRISIAN PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY.

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PREFACE
BY THE GENERAL EDITOR.

THE General Editor of *The Cambridge Bible for Schools* thinks it right to say that he does not hold himself responsible either for the interpretation of particular passages which the Editors of the several Books have adopted, or for any opinion on points of doctrine that they may have expressed. In the New Testament more especially questions arise of the deepest theological import, on which the ablest and most conscientious interpreters have differed and always will differ. His aim has been in all such cases to leave each Contributor to the unfettered exercise of his own judgment, only taking care that mere controversy should as far as possible be avoided. He has contented himself chiefly with a careful revision of the notes, with pointing out omissions, with

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suggesting occasionally a reconsideration of some question, or a fuller treatment of difficult passages, and the like.

Beyond this he has not attempted to interfere, feeling it better that each Commentary should have its own individual character, and being convinced that freshness and variety of treatment are more than a compensation for any lack of uniformity in the Series.

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*** The Text adopted in this Edition is that of Dr Scrivener's *Cambridge Paragraph Bible*. A few variations from the ordinary Text, chiefly in the spelling of certain words, and in the use of italics, will be noticed. For the principles adopted by Dr Scrivener as regards the printing of the Text see his Introduction to the *Paragraph Bible*, published by the Cambridge University Press.

INTRODUCTION.

i. Title and Divisions, Date, Author, Canonicity and Sources of the Books of Kings.

(*a*) What we name 1 and 2 Kings was anciently only one book, called by the Jews 'the Book of Kings.' It was broken into two parts by the Greek translators of the Septuagint, who did the same by the book of Samuel and the book of Chronicles, which also at first were both single books. The division between 1 and 2 Kings is made in the middle of the short reign of Ahaziah, king of Israel, a severance which would never have been made by the compiler. Having made two parts out of Samuel, and two out of the Kings, the Greek translators named the four portions thus formed, the first, second, third and fourth books of the kingdoms, or, of the kings. The Latin versions followed the divisions, but not the names, of the Greek. The two portions of Samuel, they called 1 and 2 Samuel, and our books 1 and 2 Kings. Jerome though he knew that each of these pairs was but one book, did not attempt to change titles which had been so long accepted[1]. And the whole of the Western Church has followed the Vulgate.

The Jews did not for many centuries adopt the division which had thus become current among Christians. They were led to do so at last for readiness of reference in the frequently recurring controversies between the Christians and themselves. The earliest adoption by the Jews of the Christian chapters in

[1] On this see Jerome's preface to the Books of Samuel and Kings

the Old Testament has generally been attributed to Rabbi Isaac Nathan, who began a Concordance in 1437. But in the Cambridge University Library there is a Hebrew MS.[1], of at least a century earlier date, in which the Christian divisions are marked all the way through. Into printed Hebrew Bibles they were introduced by Daniel Bomberg in 1518.

(*b*) To the date of the compilation of the Book of Kings we are guided by the latest events that are mentioned in it. The last chapter (2 Kings xxv.) concludes with the 37th year of Jehoiachin's captivity, when Evil-Merodach released him from prison. This happened B.C. 562. But this last chapter and a few verses 18—20 of chapter xxiv. are identical with chapter lii. of the prophecy of Jeremiah. There however the closing words of chapter li. 'Thus far are the words of Jeremiah' plainly shew that what follows was added by one who thought it no integral part of the prophecy, but added it to complete the historical notices found in other parts of that book, and added it most likely from this book of Kings. We may therefore conclude that this book was compiled after B.C. 562. But the compiler has no word, even of hope, to record concerning the final deliverance of the nation from captivity. That deliverance commenced with the decree of Cyrus, B.C. 536, though the final migrations did not take place till the days of Nehemiah nearly a century later, B.C. 445. Had he known of any movement in the direction of a return, the compiler of Kings would surely have made mention of it. He is cheered, apparently, at the close of his work, by the clemency shewn to Jehoiachin. He would hardly have passed over any agitation for the national redemption without a word of notice. The book was therefore finished before B.C. 536, and its date lies between that year and B.C. 561.

(*c*) Who the compiler was we have no means of deciding. The Jewish tradition[2] ascribes it to Jeremiah. But this is exceedingly improbable. The closing events recorded took place in Babylon. But at the overthrow of Jerusalem, Jeremiah

[1] No. 13. See *Catalogue of Heb. MSS.* by Dr Schiller-Szinessy, p. 17.

[2] *T. B. Baba Bathra* 15a.

was carried by the anti-Babylonian faction into Egypt (Jer. xliii. 6, 7) and after his arrival there we know not what befel him. His outspoken prediction, however, of evils to come on Egypt and on those who sought shelter there was not likely to go unpunished by the Jews who had brought him with them. Jewish writings[1] speak of his escape to Babylon. But the statement is merely an opinion in support of the current tradition. Nothing whatever is known of his fate, and there is no ground whatever, beyond tradition, for supposing him to have been the compiler of the Kings.

(*d*) In the Hebrew Bible the book stands as part of the division called by the Jews 'the Earlier Prophets.' From the Jews it was received into the Christian Canon, and there has never been any question about its acceptance.

(*e*) The compiler specifies three sources from which his narrative is drawn:

(1) The Book of the acts of Solomon (1 Kings xi. 41) as the authority for Solomon's reign.

(2) The Book of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah, mentioned *fifteen* times: for the acts of Rehoboam (1 Kings xiv. 29); of Abijam (xv. 7); of Asa (xv. 23); of Jehoshaphat (xxii. 45); of Joram (2 Kings viii. 23); of Joash (xii. 19); of Amaziah (xiv. 18); of Azariah (xv. 6); of Jotham (xv. 36); of Ahaz (xvi. 19); of Hezekiah (xx. 20); of Manasseh (xxi. 17); of Amon (xxi. 25); of Josiah (xxiii. 28) and of Jehoiakim (xxiv. 5).

(3) The Book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel, quoted *eighteen* times: in the history of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat (1 Kings xiv. 19); of Nadab (xv. 31); of Baasha (xvi. 5); of Elah (xvi. 14); of Zimri (xvi. 20); of Omri (xvi. 27); of Ahab (xxii. 39); of Ahaziah (2 Kings i. 18); of Jehu (x. 34); of Jehoahaz (xiii. 8); of Joash (xiii. 12, xiv. 15); of Jeroboam II. (xiv. 28); of Zachariah (xv. 11); of Shallum (xv. 15); of Menahem (xv. 21); of Pekahiah (xv. 26); and of Pekah (xv. 31).

[1] *Seder Olam Rabba* 20.

We have but to turn to the Books of Chronicles to find out the character of the writings to which these three general titles are given. The Chronicler adheres so closely to the language of Kings throughout the history of Solomon, that a comparison at once convinces us that he drew his narrative from the same documents as the earlier compiler. But he (2 Chron. ix. 29) describes his authorities as 'the Book' (R. V. history) 'of Nathan the prophet, the prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite, and the visions of Iddo the seer.'

We find here the key to the origin and character of all the three sources of information accessible to the compiler of Kings. 'The Book of the acts of Solomon' comprised three works written by prophets contemporary with Solomon, and which, embracing the whole period of his reign, were naturally soon gathered into one treatise, and called by one collective name. The prophetic spirit and the religious drift of all we read in the history is thus accounted for. In the notes it has been remarked that the whole purpose of the narrative is to picture Solomon's life a success, and the building of the Temple as acceptable, in so far only as the one was led in the fear of Jehovah, and the other stood as a token of obedience to the divine will; and that when Solomon's decline began, it is God who is represented as raising up the adversaries against him. A record of such a character is the composition of no mere historiographer, but bears on the face of it the imprint of prophetic hands.

When we turn to the second authority which the compiler quotes, 'the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah' and compare with it the works cited by the Chronicler, the same conclusion is arrived at. 'The Book' (R. V. histories) 'of Shemaiah the prophet and Iddo the seer' are quoted by him (2 Chron. xii. 15) as containing the events of the reign of Rehoboam, and his narrative, drawn from thence, is practically identical with the record in Kings. The same may be said concerning Abijam's reign, for which the Chronicler refers (2 Chron. xiii. 22) to 'the story' (R. V. commentary) 'of the prophet Iddo.' The authority which he gives for Jehoshaphat's

reign (2 Chron. xx. 34) is 'the Book' (R. V. history) 'of Jehu, the son of Hanani.' And after this reference a sentence follows, translated in R. V. thus: 'which is inserted in the Book of the kings of Israel[1].' This is precisely the explanation to which all the evidence tends. The prophets wrote their several books, and as time went on they *were taken up*, and included in the large collection which at last acquired the title 'the Book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel (or Judah).' We find it noticed further (2 Chron. xxvi. 22) that Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz was the writer of the history of Azariah (Uzziah), and also (2 Chron. xxxii. 32) of the acts and good deeds of Hezekiah. But here again it is stated expressly that 'the vision of Isaiah' is included in 'the Book of the kings of Judah and Israel.' Once more concerning Hezekiah's son, Manasseh, the Chronicler tells us that his acts are to be found partly 'in the Book of the kings of Israel' (2 Chron. xxxiii. 18) and in the following verse, that other things concerning him are written 'in the history of Hozai' as the R. V. renders, but the LXX., which the A. V. follows, translated 'among the sayings of the seers.'

With regard to the other kings, whose history is recorded in Chronicles, the writer is content with referring to 'the Book of the kings of Judah and Israel,' as he does (2 Chron. xvi. 11) for Asa, and (2 Chron. xxv. 28) for Amaziah, and (2 Chron. xxviii. 26) for Ahaz; or, with the names of the kingdoms in reverse order, to 'the Book of the kings of Israel and Judah,' as (2 Chron. xxvii. 7) for Jotham, (2 Chron. xxxv. 27) for Josiah, and (2 Chron. xxxvi. 8) for Jehoiakim. In one case, that of Joash, (2 Chron. xxiv. 27) he merely calls his authority 'the story' (R. V. commentary) 'of the book of the kings.' The three modes of reference last mentioned seem to indicate that before the Chronicler undertook his work, the process of combination had gone on so far as to convert all these separate 'commentaries,' 'histories,' 'visions,' and 'stories' into one compre-

[1] The A. V. gave for this clause 'who *is mentioned* in the Book of the kings of Israel,' but on the margin was added the literal rendering of the Hebrew 'was made to ascend,' which when applied to the book and not to the person intimates what is now expressed in R. V.

hensive work which could be cited indifferently as 'the Book of the kings of Judah and Israel,' or, 'of Israel and Judah,' or simply as 'the Book of the kings.'

Of the kings of Israel, except in one or two places where their acts are interwoven with, and affect the history of, the kingdom of Judah, the Chronicler makes no mention. We may safely conclude, however, from the way in which he so often speaks of the 'Book of the kings of Israel and Judah,' that he had before him their annals also, though it was foreign to his purpose to record much of them. And the whole history of both kingdoms had been put together on the same plan, and out of like materials, these materials being the writings of the prophets who flourished during the several reigns. We need not then be surprised to find large sections of 'the Book of kings' devoted to the lives of the great prophets Elijah and Elisha, and to the history of Micaiah's appearance before Ahab. The writings of the prophets were not exhausted by the history of the two kingdoms, and no theme would more commend itself to the prophetic scribe than the mighty works of those two champions, who stood forth, at a time when the house of Ahab had led Israel into heathen idolatry, to make known in Israel's darkest days, by action and speech, that Jehovah had still 'a prophet in Israel.'

It will be seen, then, that the 'Book of Kings' must consist in great part of the writings of those who were contemporary with the events of which they wrote, and that we cannot treat the book as a work of the date when the Compiler lived. And being gathered in the main from prophetic histories, there will naturally be a similarity of motive pervading the whole. To the Compiler we may ascribe those portions which compose the framework of each particular reign, i.e. the accounts of the accession and parentage[1], and of the death and character of the

[1] It is precisely in these portions that the chronological difficulties present themselves. Some of the smaller inconsistences (cf. 2 Kings viii. 25 with ix. 29) may have arisen because the Compiler made use of several authorities, in which the numbers were not quite in accord, but which, from the Jewish mode of reckoning in such matters, would not

several kings, in which there is exhibited hardly any variation of form; but the date of all which is not of this character must be judged of from internal evidence. The uniform setting of the whole work is important to be noticed as it is a proof of the unity of the composition. To its present form the work has been brought all by the same hand.

ii. Hebrew Text and Versions.

It is much to be deplored that we possess no MSS. of the Hebrew Bible of a date earlier than the 10th century of the Christian era. Thus more than a thousand years intervene between the close of the Old Testament Canon and the writing of our oldest copy. It would be marvellous if during so long a period the fallibility of scribes had not, here and there, suffered mistakes to find their way into the text. But the conditions under which it was transmitted were undoubtedly very favourable to its correct preservation. During many centuries the consonants only were written down, the knowledge of the vowels, that were to be read with them, being preserved by tradition[1]. This caused correct reading to be a large part of a Jew's education, and to insure the retention of the proper vowels, it was permitted to any one in the synagogue to interrupt the reader if he introduced a change. Thus the whole people were made conservators of the sacred text.

It was only when the Jewish nation became dispersed, and the safeguards, which had been sufficient and available among a small and united people, were found to be inoperative, that the Jewish scribes, who were the guardians of the correct tradition (*Massorah*, as it was called), began to add vowel signs to the consonants, that the people in their dispersion might all pre-

appear conflicting. More serious discrepancies (cf. 2 Kings xv. 30 with 33) must be attributed to later hands. We cannot suppose that the two verses just referred to were allowed to stand as they now do by the original Compiler of the book.

[1] See note on 2 Kings xviii. 10.

serve the sacred words as they had been handed down for generations. We cannot fix the date when the vowel points were added, but the work was certainly not completed before the death of Jerome, A.D. 420 ; and probably not for a century or two later. This form of the text is the same in all our Hebrew MSS., and as it exhibits the traditional reading, it is often spoken of as the *Massoretic* (i.e. traditional) text. When once such an authoritative text was put forth, none would be more anxious than the Jews themselves to destroy all copies of a different kind. Hence comes, in part at least, the absence of very early MSS.

The way in which the vowel points were introduced appears to have been somewhat of this kind. It was a gradual process. At the commencement some copy of the consonantal text was selected as the standard, perhaps because it was beautifully written. To this standard all future copies were made to conform. The vowels were probably first attached to the books of the Law, and to those portions of the Prophets, which, like the Law, were read in the public services. In process of time the system of vocalization was extended to every part of the text. But it was found that in the standard text adopted there were many places where the consonants written down were not those which tradition required to be read. That the consonants of the accepted text might not on this account be modified, the *Massoretes* adopted the plan of putting, in such places, the consonants of traditional reading on the margin. These marginal notes they marked by a word (*Keri*) signifying *Read* thus, and in contradistinction the standard text is termed the *Kethib*, i.e. *written*. For an instance see notes on 2 Kings xiv. 13.

The absence of any early MSS. gives their value to the ancient versions. They were made at a time anterior to the fixing of the Massoretic text, and therefore help us to judge of the correctness of the Hebrew which has been preserved to us. Three of these are deserving of special mention.

(1) *The Septuagint.* This is a Greek version made in Alexandria at various times during the third and second centuries before Christ. It owes its name to an ill-founded tradition that it was made by 72 (*Septuaginta* = 70, the nearest

round number) persons sent to Alexandria from Jerusalem at the request of Ptolemy Philadelphus. A comparison of the various parts shews that it was neither made all at one time, nor all by the same translators; but some time before the birth of Christ in consequence of the wide prevalence of the Greek language this version had largely taken the place of the Hebrew text. From it by far the largest part of the quotations in the New Testament are made: it was used by such writers as Philo and Josephus, by the Greek Fathers, and from it were made the various Latin translations which existed before the Vulgate. There exist, as will be seen from the notes, two principal recensions of the Septuagint, one preserved in the Alexandrine MS., which is in the British Museum, and another at the Vatican. The former of these has been largely brought into harmony with the present Hebrew text, and from this cause its value for critical purposes is not so great. The Vatican MS. varies considerably by additions and omissions, and also in arrangement, from the Massoretic text and seems here and there to represent a somewhat different Hebrew. In the books of Kings the help which we derive from the Septuagint is not so great as in some other books (e.g. Samuel) but it will be seen from the notes that certain alterations in the Hebrew text are suggested by it, a few of which for example, in the account of the building of the Temple, are clearly necessary to be made. One long addition has been specially described in the notes (see p. 145) but it deals with a matter which does not concern the correct reading of the text. The history also of which it treats, refers much more to what happened in the days of David than of Solomon, so that all but a very few words in it seem to be out of place where it is inserted.

(2) *The Targum*[1] (or interpretation) ascribed to Jonathan Ben-Uzziel. This is a Chaldee paraphrase reduced to writing about the fourth century after Christ. For correction of the text it is not so valuable as for the traditional interpretations

[1] *Targum* is from the same root from which *dragoman*, = an interpreter, is derived.

which it preserves. It was for a long period forbidden to put Targums into writing, and a story is told that when, as Herod's temple was in building, a written Targum on the book of Job was shewn, an outcry was made that it should be buried beneath the foundation-stones that it might not come into any one's possession. But Targums exist on nearly the whole of the Bible, though many are of very late date, and only one, that named of Onkelos, on the Pentateuch, is of earlier time than the Targum of Jonathan on the Prophets.

(3) *The Vulgate.* This name[1] is now given to the Latin version of the Bible made by Jerome of which the Old Testament portion was translated not from the Septuagint but directly from the Hebrew. After preparing, at the request of Pope Damasus, a revision of the Latin version of the New Testament, Jerome took up his residence, from A.D. 387 till his death in A.D. 420, at Bethlehem. There he studied the Hebrew Scriptures, with the guidance of the best Jewish scholars then living in the Holy Land and produced at various times a new Latin translation. Of this Samuel and Kings first appeared[2]. Hence the version which he made is a very precious guide on points of traditional interpretation, and it is also very important as evidence that since Jerome's day the original Text has suffered no alteration worth noticing. We can see from his renderings that the vowel points now inserted were not always the same as were accepted by Jerome's teachers, but in the matter of consonants his Hebrew was substantially just the same as ours.

[1] *Vulgata versio*, was used before Jerome's time, and by Jerome himself, for the *current* Latin Version in use. It is a rendering of the Greek ἡ κοινὴ ἔκδοσις which was a name given to the current text of the Septuagint. But after Jerome's Version took the place of all others in the Western Church the name *Vulgate* was confined to it.

[2] The preface which Jerome wrote for these books is generally known as the *Prologus Galeatus*, and gives a full and interesting account of the Hebrew Canon, with the arrangement of the books, and the reasons for such arrangement.

iii. Summary of the contents of the Book (I. and II. Kings).

A. Closing days of the life of David. (i. 1—ii. 11.)

i. *Contest for the succession.*

(*a*) Adonijah in David's sickness usurps the kingdom. 1 Kings i. 1—10.
(*b*) Appeal of Bathsheba and Nathan. i. 11—27.
(*c*) Solomon is anointed, as the succession is in dispute. i. 28—41.
(*d*) Alarm of the usurper and his adherents. i. 42—53.

Evil is still raised up out of David's house; the sword shall never depart. (2 Sam. xii. 10, 11.)

ii. *David's dying charge.*

(*a*) To Solomon himself. ii. 1—4.
(*b*) Concerning Joab, Barzillai, and Shimei. ii. 5—9.
(*c*) Death of David. ii. 10, 11.

The spirit of his charge is of the Law, not of the Gospel. 'Of Thy goodness slay mine enemies.' (Ps. cxliii. 12.)

B. King Solomon in all his glory. (ii. 12—x. 29.)

i. *Removal of his adversaries.*

(*a*) Adonijah asking Abishag to wife is put to death. ii. 12—25.
(*b*) Abiathar is thrust out of the priesthood. ii. 26, 27.
(*c*) Joab is slain at the altar. ii. 28—35.
(*d*) Shimei transgresses and is not spared. ii. 36—46.

'The wrath of a king is as messengers of death.' (Prov. xvi. 14.) Thus, in the spirit of his age, did Solomon shew himself a man.

ii. *His piety and wisdom.*

(*a*) Gibeon the great high place, no Temple or royal house yet built. iii. 1—4.
(*b*) Solomon's dream, and his prayer for wisdom. iii. 5—15.
(*c*) God's wisdom in him manifest by his judgement on the harlots. iii. 16—28.

He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God. (2 Sam. xxiii. 3.)

iii. *Solomon's magnificence and fame.*

(*a*) The princes which he had. iv. 1—6.
(*b*) His commissariat officers. iv. 7—19.
(*c*) Joy and abundance of his reign. iv. 20—25.
(*d*) His chariots, horses, and their maintenance. iv. 26—28.
(*e*) His understanding and excellent wisdom. iv. 29—34.
(*f*) Hiram, the king of Tyre, seeks his friendship, and grants timber for the Temple. v. 1—10.
(*g*) Solomon's league with Hiram. v. 11, 12.
(*h*) Solomon's levy of labourers to work in Lebanon. v. 13—18.

'There shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days.' (1 Kings iii. 13.) A promise richly fulfilled.

iv. *Solomon's Temple.*

(*a*) Dimensions of the building. vi. 1—4.
(*b*) The chambers that enclosed it round about. vi. 5—10.
(*c*) God's promise to dwell there. vi. 11—13.
(*d*) The Holy place and the Oracle. vi. 14—22.
(*e*) The cherubim. vi. 23—28.
(*f*) Adornment of the walls, the floor and the doors. vi. 29—35.
(*g*) The inner court. vi. 36.
(*h*) The building finished in seven years. vi. 37, 38.

'He shall build a house for My name...I will be his father and he shall be My son. (2 Sam. vii. 13, 14.)

v. *His royal palace.*

(*a*) The house of the forest of Lebanon. vii. 1—5.
(*b*) The porch of pillars. vii. 6.
(*c*) The porch of the throne. vii. 7.
(*d*) The house of Pharaoh's daughter. vii. 8.
(*e*) Excellence of the work, and the court round about it. vii. 9—12.

Note the brief mention of what was built for the king's own use. Stonework and cedar here, but the gold, and what is richest, for the house of the Lord.

vi. *Works of Hiram, the Tyrian founder.*

(*a*) He casts the pillars, Jachin and Boaz. vii. 13—22.
(*b*) The molten sea. vii. 23—26.

(*c*) The bases and the lavers to stand upon them.. vii. 27—39.
(*d*) Summary of Hiram's work for the exterior. vii. 40—47.
(*e*) The vessels of gold for the Holy place. vii. 48—51.

Art becomes the handmaid of true religion. 'The house that is to be builded for the Lord must be exceeding magnifical.' (1 Chron. xxii. 5.)

vii. *The feast of the Dedication.*

(*a*) Assembly of Israel. They bring up the ark, and the Temple is filled with the cloud of Glory. viii. 1—11.
(*b*) Solomon's address and thanksgiving. viii. 12—21.
(*c*) God's constant regard invoked. viii. 22—30.
(*d*) When an oath is made at the altar. viii. 31, 32.
(*e*) In times of defeat, of drought, of plague, pestilence and famine. viii. 33—40.
(*f*) For strangers who come to worship there. viii. 41—43.
(*g*) In time of war, and in the day of captivity. viii. 44—53.
(*h*) Solomon blesseth the assembly. viii. 54—61.
(*i*) The sacrifices, the feasting and the dismissal of the people. viii. 62—66.
(*k*) God's second appearance to Solomon. Promises and warnings. ix. 1—9.

'Beautiful for situation is...the city of the great King. God is known in her palaces for a refuge.' (Ps. xlviii. 2, 3.) This knowledge was the source of Israel's greatness under Solomon.

viii. *Solomon's power, wealth and fame.*

(*a*) Solomon's gift of cities to Hiram. ix. 10—14.
(*b*) The levy of forced labour from Canaanites and Israelites. ix. 15—23.
(*c*) Pharaoh's daughter brought to her own house. ix. 24.
(*d*) Solomon's observance of the appointed feasts. ix. 25.
(*e*) Fleet of Solomon and Hiram. ix. 26—28.
(*f*) Visit of the queen of Sheba, her wonder, praise and large gifts. x. 1—13.
(*g*) Solomon's revenue, and wide fame. x. 14—25.
(*h*) His chariots and horsemen, and traffic with Egypt. x. 26—29.

'Because of Thy Temple at Jerusalem, kings shall bring presents

unto Thee.' (Ps. lxviii. 29.) Mark how it is in conjunction with the king's worship, according to God's law, that this prosperity is showered upon him.

C. Solomon is turned away from the Lord, and his prosperity is broken. (xi. 1—43.)

God's face is set against Solomon.

(*a*) The anger of God against Solomon, whose heart the strange wives turned away. xi. 1—13.
(*b*) God raises up one adversary, Hadad the Edomite. xi. 14—22.
(*c*) A second adversary, Rezon the son of Eliada. xi. 23—25.
(*d*) A third out of Israel, Jeroboam the son of Nebat. xi. 26—28.
(*e*) Ahijah's prophecy and promise to Jeroboam. xi. 29—39.
(*f*) Solomon would have killed Jeroboam. xi. 40.
(*g*) Death of Solomon. xi. 41—43.

'The Lord shall stir up jealousy like a man of war. They shall be turned back, they shall be greatly ashamed, that say to the molten images, Ye are our Gods.' (Is. xlii. 13—17.)

D. The divided kingdoms, Israel and Judah. (1 Kings xii. 1—2 Kings xviii. 12.)

i. *Prelude to the separation.*

(*a*) Petition made to Rehoboam at Shechem. xii. 1—5.
(*b*) He follows evil counsel. xii. 6—15.
(*c*) Revolt of Israel. Jeroboam chosen for king. xii. 16—20.
(*d*) Rehoboam forbidden to fight against Israel. xii. 21—24.

God's hand is manifest in the whole story. 'God is the judge, He putteth down one and lifteth up another.' (Ps. lxxv. 7.)

ii. *ISRAEL. The son of Nebat who made Israel to sin.*

(*a*) Jeroboam's policy; the golden calves, the feast devised of his own heart. xii. 25—33.
(*b*) A man of God from Judah to Israel. His message. xiii. 1—10.
(*c*) His disobedience and its punishment. xiii. 11—32.
(*d*) Jeroboam persists in his evil way. xiii. 33, 34.
(*e*) Sends to Ahijah concerning the sickness of his son. xiv. 1—6.

(*f*) The prophet's message. The truth thereof confirmed by its partial fulfilment. xiv. 7—18.

(*g*) Death of Jeroboam. xiv. 19, 20.

Commandments spurned bring their punishment. 'To obey is better than sacrifice. Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.' (1 Sam. xv. 22, 23.)

iii. *JUDAH. The lamp preserved for David's sake.*

(*a*) Evil in Judah under Rehoboam. xiv. 21—24.

(*b*) Shishak plunders the Temple and the king's house. xiv. 25—28.

(*c*) Death of Rehoboam. xiv. 29—31.

(*d*) Abijam walks in the sins of his father. xv. 1—8.

(*e*) Asa's heart perfect with the Lord. xv. 9—15.

(*f*) Growing weak in trust he makes a league with Benhadad. xv. 16—22.

(*g*) Asa's death. xv. 23—24.

The spoiled Temple is a fit emblem of the falling away of David's line. God delights in the material house only when true worship is paid in it.

iv. *ISRAEL. The way of Jeroboam. The kings.*

(*a*) Nadab is slain by Baasha. xv. 25—31.

(*b*) Baasha king. xv. 32—34.

(*c*) The word of the Lord unto Baasha by the mouth of Jehu. xvi. 1—7.

(*d*) Elah, son of Baasha, slain by Zimri. xvi. 8—14.

(*e*) Zimri's seven days' reign, and traitor's end. xvi. 15—20.

(*f*) Omri, after a conflict, obtains the throne and builds Samaria. xvi. 21—28.

(*g*) Ahab exceeds the wickedness of all who went before him. xvi. 29—34.

'Through the wrath of the Lord the land is darkened...no man shall spare his brother.' (Is. ix. 19.) Yet note in Israel the 'pride and stoutness of heart,' which the prophet rebukes, as shewn in their grand projects of building. (Is. ix. 10.) 'For the transgression of a land many are the princes thereof.' (Prov. xxviii. 2.)

v. *Elijah. The prophet in Israel.*

(*a*) The famine foretold. Elijah hides at Cherith and in Sarepta. xvii. 1—16.
(*b*) The widow's son dies and is restored. xvii. 17—24.
(*c*) Elijah in the presence of Ahab. xviii. 1—16.
(*d*) The challenge. God against Baal. xviii. 17—29.
(*e*) The Lord He is God. Baal's priests are slain. xviii. 30—40.
(*f*) Promise of rain. xviii. 41—46.
(*g*) Flight of Elijah to Horeb. xix. 1—8.
(*h*) God's revelations to him there. xix. 9—18.
(*i*) The calling of Elisha. xix. 19—21.

The bravest of God's heroes, yet broken in heart at last. He longed to do so much, but learnt at length how God works. 'I, the Lord, will hasten it in his time.' (Is. lx. 22.)

vi. *Syrian invasion of Israel.*

(*a*) Arrogant claims of Benhadad. xx. 1—12.
(*b*) Victory promised and given to Ahab. xx. 13—21.
(*c*) A new attack defeated in like manner. xx. 22—30.
(*d*) Benhadad as cringeing as before he was haughty. xx. 31—34.
(*e*) Ahab weakly spares the man whom God had doomed. xx. 35—43.

Jehovah, longsuffering, does not cast off his rebellious people, nor let them fall into any hands, but those of his special instruments. 'I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.' (Malachi iii. 6.)

vii. *Naboth is stoned and is dead.*

(*a*) Naboth the Jezreelite refuses to part with his vineyard. xxi. 1—4.
(*b*) Jezebel compasses the death of Naboth. xxi. 5—16.
(*c*) Ahab taking possession hears God's doom from Elijah. xxi. 17—24.
(*d*) Some signs of repentance gain Ahab a respite. xxi. 25—29.

The evil examples on the throne have their fruit in other places. 'If a ruler hearken to lies, all his servants are wicked.' (Prov. xxix. 12.)

viii. *Judah and Israel in alliance.*

(*a*) Jehoshaphat goes with Ahab to Ramoth-gilead. xxii. 1—28.

(*b*) Ahab's ignoble end, according to the word of Elijah. xxii. 29—40.

(*c*) Jehoshaphat's reign over Judah. xxii. 41—50.

(*d*) Ahaziah follows Ahab, on his throne and in his sins. xxii. 51—2 Kings i. 18.

(*e*) Elijah taken away. His spirit rests on Elisha. ii. 1—18.

(*f*) Elisha heals the waters at Jericho, and curses the youths at Beth-el. ii. 19—25.

(*g*) Israel and Judah war against Edom. iii. 1—27.

Note the evil influence of this alliance on Jehoshaphat. He asks for a prophet of the Lord, in the first expedition at the outset, but then he neglects his words; to the second war he goes, and only thinks of the Lord's prophet, when he is in deep peril. Joined with Ahab in policy, he is made his equal in penalty. 'In his son's days' God brought evil upon his house.

ix. *Elisha.* '*He did wonders in his life.*'

(*a*) Elisha multiplieth the widow's oil. iv. 1—7.

(*b*) He promises a son to the Shunammite, and restores him to life again. iv. 8—37.

(*c*) He heals the pottage at Gilgal, and satisfies a hundred men with twenty loaves. iv. 38—44.

(*d*) Naaman is healed. Gehazi becomes leprous. v. 1—27.

(*e*) Elisha causeth an axe-head to swim. vi. 1—7.

(*f*) He revealeth the plans of the Syrian king, and smites the Syrian troops with blindness. vi. 8—23.

(*g*) Siege of Samaria. In the famine Elisha foretells a sudden plenty, which cometh to pass. vi. 24—vii. 20.

(*h*) The Shunammite's land restored for Elisha's sake. viii. 1—6.

(*i*) Elisha foretells Ben-hadad's death, and Hazael's cruelty. viii. 7—15.

Elijah at his death appeared to have achieved but little, yet Jehovah's 'seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which had not bowed unto Baal' (1 Kings xix. 18) were found in many places, and gave some hope to the labours of Elisha. But as a whole, 'Ephraim was joined to idols.' (Hosea iv. 17.)

x. *Fruits of the alliance between Judah and Israel.*

(*a*) Jehoram king of Judah walks in the ways of the house of Ahab. viii. 16—24.

(*b*) Ahaziah, his son by Athaliah the daughter of Ahab, follows the same path. viii. 25—27.

(*c*) Another war with Syria. viii. 28, 29.

(*d*) Jehu anointed at Ramoth Gilead. ix. 1—14.

(*e*) Jehu slays both the kings, and Jezebel also. ix. 15—37.

The law had spoken in vain to Jehoshaphat, and now the penalty is strictly carried out. 'Thou shalt not make marriages with them: thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. For they will turn away thy son from following Me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the Lord be kindled against you and destroy thee suddenly.' (Deut. vii. 3—4.)

xi. *ISRAEL. Jehu on the throne.*

(*a*) Ahab's sons put to death. x. 1—11.

(*b*) Jehu's zeal against the Baalites. x. 12—28.

(*c*) The zeal stops short in its course. x. 29—31.

(*d*) Israel begins to be cut short. Death of Jehu. x. 32—36.

'*My* zeal for the Lord' was Jehu's boast. He forgot that he was only the scourge of God. 'For he saith, By the strength of my hand I have done it, and by my wisdom, for I am prudent.' (Is. x. 13.)

xii. *JUDAH. Athaliah and Joash.*

(*a*) Athaliah murders all the royal family except Joash. xi. 1—3.

(*b*) Jehoiada plans to kill her and set Joash on the throne. xi. 4—21.

(*c*) Joash restores the dilapidated temple. xii. 1—16.

(*d*) Hazael's expedition against Jerusalem bought off. xii. 17—18.

(*e*) Joash is murdered by his servants. xii. 19—21.

'A man that is laden with the blood of any person shall flee unto the pit; let no man stay him.' (Prov. xxviii. 17 R.V.)

xiii. *ISRAEL. The house of Jehu.*

(*a*) Jehoahaz reigns ill, and is delivered into the hands of the Syrians. xiii. 1—3.

(*b*) A saviour promised on his repentance. xiii. 4—9.

(*c*) Jehoash succeeds and is an evil ruler. xiii. 10—13.

(*d*) Elisha on his death bed visited by Jehoash. xiii. 14—19.

(*e*) Death of Elisha. Victories of Jehoash over Syria. xiii. 20—25.

'The Lord hath sent you all his servants the prophets, rising early and sending them; but ye have not hearkened, nor inclined your ear to hear.' (Jer. xxv. 4.)

xiv. *JUDAH. Amaziah meddling to his hurt.*

(*a*) Amaziah reigns, and takes vengeance on his father's murderers. xiv. 1—6.
(*b*) He conquers the Edomites. xiv. 7.
(*c*) His proud challenge to Jehoash and his defeat at Beth-shemesh. xiv. 8—16.
(*d*) He is driven from Jerusalem by a conspiracy, and slain at Lachish. xiv. 17—20.
(*e*) Azariah's accession. xiv. 21—22.

The moderation of Amaziah was praiseworthy at first and in accord with God's law, but vanity led him astray. 'A man's pride shall bring him low.' (Prov. xxix. 23.)

xv. *ISRAEL. Third and fourth generations of Jehu's house.*

(*a*) Jeroboam II. follows in the ways of Jeroboam I. xiv. 23, 24.
(*b*) God has pity upon Israel. xiv. 25—27.
(*c*) Wars and victories of Jeroboam. xiv. 28.
(*d*) Zechariah, Jeroboam's son, succeeds. xiv. 29.
(*e*) Azariah reigns in Judah and is smitten with leprosy. xv. 1—7.
(*f*) Zechariah slain by Shallum brings Jehu's house to an end. xv. 8—12.

The zeal of Jehu's descendants was even less than his own. Yet God seemed waiting to the very end to enlarge His promise, to increase His grace. But 'their iniquities have turned away these things, and their sins have withholden good things from them.' (Jer. v. 25.)

xvi. *ISRAEL and JUDAH. The Syro-Ephraimite war.*

(*a*) Shallum, king of Israel, slain by Menahem. xv. 13—15.
(*b*) Menahem becomes a vassal of Assyria. xv. 16—22.
(*c*) Pekahiah, king of Israel, slain by Pekah. xv. 23—26.
(*d*) Pekah's kingdom attacked by Tiglath-pileser: Pekah slain by Hoshea. xv. 27—31.

(*e*) Jotham, king of Judah. Pekah and Rezin, king of Samaria, plot against him. xv. 32—38.

(*f*) Syro-Ephraimite war against Ahaz, who purchases the aid of Tiglath-pileser. xvi. 1—9.

(*g*) Ahaz is entangled with Syrian idolatry. His death. xvi. 10—20.

Sorely needed was the prophet's message. 'Violence and spoil is heard in her; before me continually is grief and wounds. Be thou instructed, O Jerusalem, lest My soul depart from thee; lest I make thee desolate, a land not inhabited.' (Jer. vi. 7—8.)

xvii. *ISRAEL. Last days of the ten tribes.*

(*a*) Hoshea attacked and taken prisoner by Shalmaneser. xvii. 1—4.

(*b*) The people carried captive for their many sins. xvii. 5—23.

(*c*) Samaria colonized by the Assyrians. xvii. 24.

(*d*) The colonists learn something of the worship of Jehovah. xvii. 25—28.

(*e*) But they worship still their own idols also. xvii. 29—41.

(*f*) Hezekiah, king of Judah. Second notice of the captivity of Israel. xviii. 1—12.

'If they will not obey, I will utterly pluck up and destroy that nation' (Jer. xii. 17). As a people the ten tribes appear no more.

E. The two tribes. (2 Kings xviii. 13—xxv. 30.)

i. *Hezekiah.*

(*a*) Sennacherib, king of Assyria, invades Judæa, and is bought off for a brief period. xviii. 13—16.

(*b*) Defiant message of the Assyrian. xviii. 17—37.

(*c*) Hezekiah sends his ministers to Isaiah the prophet. xix. 1—7.

(*d*) A second message of defiance. xix. 8—13.

(*e*) Hezekiah's prayer. xix. 14—19.

(*f*) The answer of Jehovah by his prophet. xix. 20—34.

(*g*) Assyrian overthrow. xix. 35—37.

(*h*) Hezekiah's sickness and recovery. xx. 1—11.

(*i*) His ostentation and the rebuke thereof. xx. 12—19.

(*k*) Death of Hezekiah. xx. 20, 21.

Hezekiah, a marvel of God's grace. 'A clean thing out of an unclean.' (Job xiv. 4.) Who but God doeth this?

ii. *Manasseh and Amon.*

(*a*) Manasseh reigns and undoes all that Hezekiah had done. xxi. 1—10.

(*b*) The doom of the land is sealed because of his sin. xxi. 11—18.

(*c*) Amon follows in his father's steps. xxi. 19—22.

(*d*) He is slain by a conspiracy of his servants. xxi. 23—26.

Manasseh's repentance avails for himself, but not for the nation he has led so far astray. Yet 'God looketh upon men, and if any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which is right and it profited me not; He will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light. Lo, all these things worketh God oftentimes with man.' (Job xxxiii. 27—29.)

But again of the perverse 'He striketh them as wicked men in the open sight of others; because they turned back from Him, and would not consider any of His ways.' (Job xxxiv. 25—27.)

iii. *Josiah.*

(*a*) Josiah succeeding repairs the temple. xxii. 1—7.

(*b*) Finding of the book of the Law and the effect thereof. xxii. 8—11.

(*c*) Huldah the prophetess consulted. Her answer. xxii. 12—20.

(*d*) Josiah destroys idolatry out of the land and defiles the altar at Beth-el. xxiii. 1—20.

(*e*) Keeps a solemn passover, and banishes superstitious rites. xxiii. 21—28.

(*f*) He is wounded at Megiddo and dies. xxiii. 29, 30.

'The remembrance of Josiah is like the composition of the perfume that is made by the art of the apothecary: it is sweet as honey in all mouths and as music at a banquet of wine.' (Eccles. xlix. 1.)

iv. *The falling away.* '*The Lord could not pardon.*'

(*a*) Jehoahaz succeeds and is made prisoner by the Egyptians. xxxiii. 31—33.

(*b*) Jehoiakim set up by the Egyptians. xxiii. 34—37.

(*c*) He submits to Nebuchadnezzar, but soon revolts and is punished. xxiv. 1—7.

(*d*) Jehoiachin's brief reign. The beginning of the Captivity. xxiv. 8—16.

(*e*) Zedekiah reigns and rebels against Babylon. xxiv. 17—20.

(*f*) Siege and capture of Jerusalem, and of her last king. xxv. 1—8.

(*g*) Burning of the city and deportation of spoil and captives. xxv. 9—21.

(*h*) Gedaliah the governor of the residue being slain by Ishmael the people flee to Egypt. xxv. 22—26.

(*i*) Kindly treatment of Jehoiachin by Evil-merodach. xxv. 27—30.

And so was brought to pass what Jeremiah had foretold, and enforced by an example constantly present before those to whom the prophet's message was all in vain (Jer. vii. 12—16) 'Go ye now unto my place which was in Shiloh...and see what I did to it for the wickedness of my people Israel. And now because ye have done all these works...therefore will I do unto this house which is called by My name, wherein ye trust, and unto the place which I gave to you and to your fathers as I have done to Shiloh...Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to Me: for I will not hear thee.'

iv. Historical Survey of the Book of Kings.

With the exception of two reigns, this book embraces the whole regal period of Israelite history. The reign of Saul, the first king, had been almost an utter failure, that of David in many points was a signal success. The work of the compiler of Kings commences at David's deathbed, but he opens his history without introduction, clearly designing it to be a continuation of the books of Samuel. Solomon was anointed and enthroned before the death of his father because of an attempt, that was made by another brother, to seize the succession for himself, in defiance of a promise (1 Kings i. 13) which David had given to Bathsheba that Solomon should reign after him. The new king had not been long crowned before he received the dying charge of his father, and when the fierce measures against certain individuals, which David counselled, had been carried into

effect, Solomon became, as his name implies (1 Chron. xxii. 9) a man of peace. In strong contrast to the warlike times of David, is the recital of Hadad's apparently unopposed return to the throne of Edom, and of the establishment of Rezon as king in Damascus (1 Kings xi.).

Yet though he engaged but little in war, Solomon introduced in many ways a new and splendid era for his people. In literature and science he was instructed beyond the most learned men of the time; in commerce he established relations not only with Tyre, and the Hittite and Syrian kingdoms close at hand, but with Arabia, Egypt and perhaps with India through his fleet on the Red Sea, while ships of his were also sailing along with those of Phœnicia to the various countries on the Mediterranean. In art he called to his aid the best architectural skill which Tyre and Sidon could supply, while the internal organization of the land was made in its character as complete as possible to supply the magnificence and luxury of a court the fame of which drew the queen of distant Sheba to Jerusalem, where she found the reality to overpass every report that had been made to her concerning it. Hence we need not be surprised that among his wives Solomon numbered, beside the daughter of Pharaoh, princesses from all the nations round about; nor is it to be wondered at, when they beheld the lavish expenditure which had been bestowed on the temple, that they asked and obtained from the king that some, if not with equal, magnificence should be exhibited in honour of the divinities of the lands from whence they had come. Solomon was rich and manifestly fond of state. So there arose outside the city on the hill, afterwards known in consequence as the Mount of Offence, temples to Ashtoreth, whose worship his Zidonian artizans may have made well known to Israel, as well as to those other gods whom the writer of Kings terms 'the abominations' of Moab and of Ammon.

To meet the outlay needed for his buildings, and for the costly service of his court Solomon made heavy exactions from his people both in money and in forced labour. Hence his reign though glorious had been burdensome. Yet for

David's son, a monarch of such wide extended fame, burdens were for a long time patiently endured, but when Solomon's son succeeded his father a cry went up from the whole land 'Make our heavy burdens lighter.' Rehoboam was headstrong and, following foolish advice, spake not of relaxation but of greater severity, and in consequence of his words ten out of the twelve tribes fell away from David's house, and made them a king of their own. Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, the man whom they set up, was one who had been employed by Solomon to superintend the taskwork of his forced labourers. He seems to have sympathised with the murmurs which that service evoked and in some way or other to have sided with those who desired to be delivered from it. He also was encouraged by one of the prophets (1 Kings xi. 31) to take part with those who were the adversaries of Solomon. Hence before Solomon's death Jeroboam had been forced to flee into Egypt, but he appears to have returned about the time of that event, and to have been welcomed and accepted by the revolting tribes as their fittest leader. A separate kingdom was established with its capital at Shechem, and the new king, that his people might not be won over to Rehoboam by going up to Jerusalem to worship in the temple, instituted two shrines in his own dominions, where he set up golden calves and persuaded the people to accept them as symbols of the Jehovah who had brought them out of Egypt. For this he is constantly branded by the writer of Kings as 'the son of Nebat who made Israel to sin.'

Rehoboam failed to win back his revolted subjects, but Jeroboam's action, in fortifying Penuel on the other side of the Jordan, seems to shew that he did not feel altogether secure on his throne, and would prepare for himself a stronghold in the mountainous region of Gilead. The reign of Rehoboam was in other respects not prosperous. The king of Egypt, Shishak, invaded the land (1 Kings xiv. 25), and plundered the temple of much of its wealth, while Jeroboam with the forces of the northern kingdom harassed Judah exceedingly (1 Kings xiv. 30). These attacks were successfully repelled by Abijam (2 Chron.

xiii. 19), Rehoboam's son, while Asa his grandson so strengthened his army as to be able to resist not only the northern power but also an invasion of the Ethiopians, who appear to have meditated an invasion of Judah similar to that of Shishak in the previous generation (2 Chron. xiv. 12).

Meanwhile in Israel Nadab, the son of Jeroboam, had turned his arms against the Philistines (1 Kings xv. 27), but in the course of the war was slain by one of his own people, Baasha; who also made himself king, and did to death all that belonged to Jeroboam. This fate had been proclaimed beforehand by the mouth of the same prophet (Ahijah) who had encouraged the founder of the new kingdom in his first revolt against Solomon. Kings in Israel succeeded one another with great rapidity, the throne being nearly always reached, as in Baasha's case, through the blood of a predecessor. In the reign of Omri, the sixth king, however, the power and influence of the ten tribes increased, and so great a mark did this sovereign make in the affairs of the neighbouring nations that in the Assyrian records the kingdom of Israel is continually spoken of as 'the house of Omri.' Omri built him a new capital, which he named Samaria, a name which ultimately came to be applied to the whole kingdom. From the Moabite stone we learn about the conflicts between him and his neighbour Mesha, the king of Moab, and the victory seems for a while to have been on the side of Israel, though the conquests of Omri and his son Ahab were all retaken by Moab in the days of Ahaziah, Ahab's son and successor. We find, too, that Omri was not always victorious against the Syrians, as after one defeat (1 Kings xx. 34) the Syrian monarch made streets for himself in the new-built city of Samaria.

The son of Omri seems to have gone beyond his father in his desire to adorn the land with magnificent buildings. He was the Solomon of the northern kingdom, both in his architectural tastes and in his connexion with Phœnicia. He had for wife a daughter of the king of Zidon; hence he could attract to his country workmen of the greatest skill of that period, and

we can picture to ourselves how gorgeous the fabrics must have been that are alluded to by the historian as 'the ivory house which he made and the many cities that he built.' By the wish of Jezebel his wife he reared up a grand temple to Baal, and at her instigation became a fervent devotee of the Phœnician divinities, so that it is said of him 'there was none like unto Ahab which did sell himself to work wickedness.'

The Syrians were to him most troublesome neighbours. Twice did Benhadad come against Samaria, and though he was repelled there, we find the Syrian forces in possession of Ramoth-gilead at the close of Ahab's reign. But the largest part of the history during the reign of Ahab is devoted to the work of the prophet Elijah. Into the midst of the excessive wickedness God sends the most wondrous of His prophets. He comes upon the scene most abruptly, and in the name of Jehovah announces 'there shall not be dew nor rain but according to my word.' Every part of Elijah's life bears out the description of the writer of Ecclesiasticus (xlviii. 1). He was 'as fire and his word burned like a lamp.' By a demonstration of the vanity of Baal-worship and of the truth of his own mission, he on one occasion for the moment carried the people with him and made them his agents in the slaughter of the idolatrous priesthood. But the evil appeared even then too deep-rooted for remedy, and the sentence of Jehovah was given, 'him that dieth of Ahab in the city the dogs shall eat, and him that dieth in the field shall the fowls of the air eat.' 'The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel.' A sentence most terrible, but carried out to the very letter.

Ahab came to his death in the battle of Ramoth-gilead. Resolved to recover that city from the Syrians, he invited Jehoshaphat, who had succeeded his father Asa as king of Judah, to go with him to the war, for there was now peace and alliance between the two kingdoms. Jehoshaphat consented in most liberal wise, but the whole undertaking was disastrous. The troops of Israel and Judah fled like shepherdless sheep, and Ahab was wounded so fatally that he died the same day. He left many children, but his immediate successor was crippled by a fall,

and in his brief two years' reign Moab regained its freedom, nor could any effort be made to drive the Syrians from the trans-jordanic portion of Israel.

It is not unlikely that the magnificence of the house of Ahab proved attractive to Jehoshaphat, and probably the connexion of Ahab with the Phœnician power made his alliance one to be courted by the smaller kingdom. So it came to pass that a son of Jehoshaphat took to wife a daughter of Ahab, and Israel and Judah were completely at one. When therefore Jehoram, another son of Ahab, followed his brother on the throne of Israel, there was once more an alliance for war purposes between the two monarchs. Jehoram would fain subdue the revolted Moabites, and the king of Judah accompanies the son, as he had before accompanied the father, to battle, and likewise compels the Edomite monarch, who was at this time a vassal of Judah, to give the troops a passage through his country, and to contribute his help against Moab. The expedition, during which Elisha foretold a sudden supply of water to the thirsty army, was in the end attended with no success.

The northern enemy of Israel, the Syrians, must have been withheld in some way from their inroads upon Israel at the period when Jehoram found himself able to collect his troops and march southward against Moab, but the time of peace did not last long. We hear first of irregular bands of marauders sent by Syria to scour the country, whose plans however were thwarted now and again by information given to the Israelite king by the prophet Elisha. But at last Benhadad gathered his hosts together and investing Samaria reduced the population to the verge of starvation, so that the most revolting means were resorted to for maintaining life. The siege was however abandoned. A panic seized the Syrian troops, and when the Israelites heard of it and ventured forth they found the enemy's camp deserted and spoil of all kinds left in confusion. So plenty took the place of hunger. The Syrian king Benhadad, no long time after, was murdered as he lay on his sick bed by Hazael, one of his officers, who made himself king of Syria, and in the future wrought much evil upon Israel. We

know that already in Jehoram's reign the assaults of Hazael had commenced, for the army of Israel was holding Ramoth-gilead against him when the judgement pronounced a generation before upon the house of Ahab received its complete fulfilment.

At the death of Elijah Ahab's family were still reigning, and to the outward view not much had been accomplished by the prophet's life. But the fruit of his work made itself felt in the days of Elisha. Schools of the prophets were multiplied, the seven thousand, of whom God spake (1 Kings xix. 18) who had not bowed the knee to Baal, were made manifest in many places, and Elijah's words were remembered by some who appeared little likely to have borne them in mind. When the prophet foretold the doom of Ahab as he stood in the portion of the newly murdered Naboth, there was in the retinue of the king one Jehu the son of Nimshi, an officer of the Israelite army, who after Ahab's death came to be in chief command while Jehoram was holding Ramoth-gilead. Jehoram had gone from Ramoth to Jezreel because of a wound he had received, and in his absence Elisha despatched one of the sons of the prophets to give to Jehu a divine commission for the execution of utter destruction on the house of his master. Jehu had treasured up the saying of Elijah, and both he and his comrades were no unwilling instruments to carry out the sentence. Riding at once to Jezreel, they not only put to death Jehoram, but also Ahaziah, Jehoshaphat's son, the king of Judah who had come to visit his kinsman the king of Israel. Jehoram's dead body was left in Naboth's vineyard, while from a window in Jezreel, Jezebel was thrown down and trampled to death under the feet of Jehu's horses. By some questionable strokes of policy he succeeded in destroying all the children of Ahab, and in cutting off at one blow all who were given up to the worship of Baal. The Phœnician rites were abolished in Israel and never appeared again.

The name of Jehu is found in the Assyrian inscriptions more than once, and it is a sign of the great influence of the previous dynasty, that as Samaria for a long time was known to the Assyrians as the 'house of Omri,' so Jehu figures as 'the son of Omri.' It is not clear what Jehu's relations with Assyria were,

but we gather from the Scripture story (2 Kings x. 32) that they were not of such a nature as to help him to ward off the hosts of his nearer neighbours the Syrians. 'Hazael smote them in all the coasts of Israel' and from the prophecy of Amos (i. and ii.) we see that Moab and Ammon were in league with Syria, so that Jehu was beset on every side. Nor was the case of his successor any better (2 Kings xiii. 3). 'The Lord delivered Israel into the hand of Hazael, and into the hand of Benhadad the son of Hazael, all their days,' and the army of Jehoahaz was reduced at this time to the most insignificant dimensions (2 Kings xiii. 7). But the closing days of this king and the reign of his son and successor were of such a character as to gain the favour of God and the approval of His prophet, for Elisha on his death bed was visited by Jehoash, and promised him a succession of victories over his enemies. Encouraged no doubt by the prophet's words the king took up arms, and was able to drive the Syrian hosts out of the lands on the west of the Jordan, while in the days of Jeroboam II., the son and successor of Jehoash, the eastern districts of Gilead and Bashan were also recovered, and the dominion of Israel extended 'from the entering in of Hamath unto the sea of the Arabah,' a result which we are told had been foreseen and spoken of by the prophet Jonah, who flourished in these times.

But the whole nation was corrupt, and the luxury introduced by these conquests increased the evil. The picture of the life in Samaria at this period is painted for us by the prophet Amos, and as we read the description of the wanton excesses and sensual self-indulgence we are in no wonder that judgement came quickly upon the whole land. God was preparing his rod, the Assyrian, and even before the external blows fell, internal violence was working out the ruin of the nation. Zechariah, the son of Jeroboam II., was murdered after a short reign, and thus the four generations promised to Jehu's dynasty were brought to a violent end. The murderer Shallum was himself slain within a month, and the reign of his successor, Menahem, marked the annals of Israel with atrocities unknown before. It was in his day that the Assyrian power first came against the

land. Pul, the king of Assyria, who must previously have reduced the power of Syria, which lay between, drew near to attack Israel (2 Kings xv. 19), and Menahem compounded for the possession of his crown by becoming the vassal of Assyria, and by the payment of an enormous tribute which he exacted from the people of the land, and the amount of which demonstrates the wealthy condition of Israel even in this age of disorder and misrule. Pekahiah succeeded his father, but two years only passed away, before he was dethroned and slain by Pekah one of his captains. In the reign of this king we begin to discern clearly how the dominion of Assyria was spreading, and bringing into subjection all the neighbouring kingdoms.

Turning back to notice the kingdom of Judah, we find that when Ahaziah was slain by Jehu, Athaliah the queen, the daughter of Ahab, put all the seed royal to death, with the exception of one infant boy, who escaped and was kept in safety under the protection of the high priest. After a reign of six years, vengeance fell upon the bloodstained queen, and the seven years old child, Joash, was put upon the throne of David, and held his seat for forty years. But, like the northern kingdom, Judah was constantly feeling the pressure of Syrian inroads. The armies of Damascus came in the days of Joash, and overran the country of the Philistines, capturing the city of Gath (2 Kings xii. 17). Jerusalem lay temptingly near at hand, and Hazael set his face to go up thither, but the treasures of the temple and the king's house were drawn upon once more, the enemy retired, and we hear of no further troubles from war in this long reign, though for some reason his own people conspired against Joash, and did not let him die a natural death. Amaziah, the son of Joash, must also have been free from inroads on the north, for he was able, after punishing the murderers of his father, to lead his army southward and win great victories over the Edomites. Elated thereby, he sent a foolish challenge to Jehoash of Israel, and refusing good counsel, engaged in war with him, and was defeated in a battle at Beth-shemesh, and the future of his life is not very clearly set forth in the Bible narrative. We read how the king of Israel brake

down the northern walls of Jerusalem, and brought the king of Judah as a captive into his own capital, but whether he was put again on the throne, or his son was made regent during the rest of the father's lifetime, is a question which is involved in some obscurity.

But in spite of these losses to Israel, his son Azariah (Uzziah) must have been able to continue his father's conquests in Idumæa, for we find him restoring Elath (2 Kings xiv. 22), and thus opening once more the door of commerce to Judah by the way of the Red Sea, so that at this period Judah and Israel alike must have advanced to a high degree of material prosperity. Yet towards the end of his life king Azariah was smitten with leprosy for going into the temple and usurping the priest's duty of offering incense at the altar. The reign of his son Jotham was the time when an alliance was formed between Israel and Syria to crush the house of David and to put a creature of their own upon the throne of Judah, but Jotham was dead before these plans could be carried out. It is in the history of this Syro-Ephraimite war that Isaiah's prophetic ministry comes most markedly before us, and in connexion with which was uttered that wondrous prophecy of the Virgin-born son (Is. vii. 14), of which only the fulness of time beheld the complete fulfilment. The influence of the prophet was not however strong enough with king Ahaz to persuade him to trust wholly in Jehovah. Help was sought from Tiglath Pileser, and Israel's king became the tributary of Assyria. Damascus was taken and overthrown, and her king put to death, while as their manner was the conquerors carried away the Syrian population and settled them in a distant land. Pekah must have speedily ceased to harass Judah, probably deterred by the fate which had befallen his northern ally at the hands of the Assyrian king. Yet his death was not unbloody, for 'Hoshea the son of Elah smote him and slew him and reigned in his stead.' In the days of Pekah, Assyria had captured a large number of the cities in the tribe of Naphthali, in the north of Israel. It may be that Hoshea discovered that if he could bring about Pekah's death, he would have the Assyrians on his side and be

made king of Israel. For so it came to pass, but the alliance was only a short one if it were made. Tiglath Pileser was succeeded by Shalmaneser, and in a very short time the Israelite monarch, who should have been faithful to those who appear to have set him on the throne, was found to be intriguing with Egypt, and for this offence there was no pardon. The capital city was besieged and taken by Assyria after three years, during which time Shalmaneser died and was followed by Sargon. The inhabitants of the ten tribes were deported, while strange people from other lands were put in their place that the country might not be untenanted. Thus was brought about the end of the northern kingdom and the people of the ten tribes, with the exception of a few who returned with the captivity of Judah in the time of Cyrus, were lost from henceforth, in their intermixture with the nations whither they were carried away.

We have now to follow the history of Judah alone, from the sixth year of Hezekiah, the son of Ahaz. This king instituted great religious reforms at the outset of his reign, but was sorely troubled by the inroads of Assyria. Greed of conquest was leading the armies of Nineveh nearer and nearer to the confines of Egypt, and urging them to absorb into their dominion all the countries which lay in the midst. Sennacherib had succeeded Sargon, and he came with his forces against the country of the Philistines, and while engaged in the siege of Lachish sent threats to Hezekiah that Jerusalem should next be assailed. The king of Judah bought, as he thought, a respite at a large price. But in spite of the tribute, from some reason or other, Sennacherib felt that Jerusalem was too strong a position to be left unsubdued in his rear while he marched toward Egypt. Hence his ambassadors came again with insulting blasphemies against the God of Judah, and taunting boasts against the feebleness of Hezekiah. But for His own sake and for His servant David's sake Jerusalem was at this time delivered. A spirit of panic came over the Assyrians, and a great part of their army was destroyed by a pestilence. Sennacherib in consequence withdrew, and soon after was slain by two of his own sons.

At this time we begin to hear of that Chaldæan power, which in the end prevailed against Assyria, and was the agent in the final overthrow of Jerusalem. Babylon was beginning to rise against Nineveh, and, as we may conclude, with a wish to get help in such a struggle, the Chaldæan ruler turned his thoughts to Judah. The envoys of Berodach-baladan—for he was at this time king of Babylon—came professedly to congratulate Hezekiah on his recovery from a severe disease, but really to sound him in reference to a war in common against the armies of Nineveh. Hezekiah was disposed to listen to their proposals, and made a great display of all his treasures and his military resources. For this, God's anger was pronounced against him by Isaiah, and he was told that the days should come when all his descendants and all that he possessed should be made a booty by these very Babylonians before whom he had been thus ostentatious. A portion of this prophecy was literally fulfilled in the next reign, for Manasseh the son of Hezekiah was taken prisoner and carried away to Babylon (2 Chron. xxxiii. 11), and thus began the first stage of Judah's subjection. Manasseh is handed down to us as an unprecedently wicked monarch, and Amon his son followed in his steps.

Under Josiah there was a time of much reformation and a hope of better days. He did more than any previous king to bring about purity of religious worship, and destroyed the magnificent temples which Solomon had erected on the Mount of Offence and which hitherto had been spared, probably because they stood far outside the city and were structures of much architectural beauty. Josiah was manifestly under the protection of Assyria, for when the king of Egypt, Pharaoh-necoh, had come by sea to Palestine, and was about to begin his march against the Assyrians, Josiah went northward in pursuit of him and was slain in a battle at Megiddo. This Egyptian expedition was for a brief time successful, but soon all that had belonged to Egypt down to the very confines of their own land fell into the hands of the Babylonians (2 Kings xxiv. 7). In the place of Josiah, the people of Judah set up his

son Jehoahaz. He was however allowed only a three months' reign, for Pharaoh made him prisoner and put his brother Jehoiakim into his place, no doubt making him swear subjection to Egypt, and imposing as large a tribute as he could exact.

Judah became now an object of attack by Babylon, and Nebuchadnezzar sent not only some Chaldæans to ravage the land but incited all the neighbouring tribes to join in the attack on the ally of Egypt. Jehoiakim reigned eleven years in this turmoil, his son and successor Jehoiachin but three months. For Egypt was now utterly broken, and the new king judged it to be his best policy to go forth and submit and make peace with Nebuchadnezzar if he might. His fate was a protracted captivity in Babylon, and along with him were carried away many of the distinguished people of the land, and among them went the prophet Ezekiel. A third son of Josiah, Zedekiah, was placed on the throne of Judah as Nebuchadnezzar's vassal, but after a time thought himself strong enough to rebel. This provoked the final blow. The Chaldæans besieged and took the city, burned the temple and all the chief buildings, and carried all but the poorest of the people into captivity. Over this remnant they placed a governor Gedaliah, but he was soon assassinated, thereupon the people fled away into Egypt in terror of what the Babylonians would do as vengeance for the murder of their officer. It was by these fugitives that Jeremiah was taken down to Egypt, and the after-fate of that prophet is wholly unknown.

One final word the writer of Kings records, an omen perhaps he thought it of a coming relief for the whole captive nation. In the thirty-seventh year of Jehoiachin's captivity a new king of Babylon, Evil-merodach, came to the throne, and lifted up the long imprisoned king of Judah, and raised him to a place of honour among the vassals whom he kept around him.

v. Character of the Book of Kings and its Relation to other books of the Old Testament.

The Book of Kings was clearly meant to be a continuation of the Books of Samuel. The writer alludes continually in the life of Solomon to the promises which had been made by God to David and which are mentioned in the second of those books. A son was to succeed David whose kingdom should be established of the Lord, who should build a house for the name of Jehovah, to whom God would be a father, and from whom the mercy of the Lord should not depart (2 Sam. vii.). To shew that this prophecy was fulfilled is the object of the Compiler of the Book of Kings, and whatever does not conduce thereto is passed over with but little notice. There elapsed, no doubt, a considerable time between the plague in Jerusalem, with which the Books of Samuel conclude, and the feeble age of David described in the opening paragraph of this Book. But to give historical events in their full and complete order is no part of our writer's aim. We can see this from every portion of his work. He opens his narrative with so much, and no more, of the story of David's closing life as serves to introduce the accession of Solomon, while to the history of that monarch, in whom the promises made to David had so conspicuous a fulfilment, he devotes about one quarter of his whole work. Solomon's glory and prosperity are set forth in the early chapters, and he is exhibited as the king whom God had set up over Israel to do judgement and justice. While he walked in this way it was well with him; but on his decline therefrom, chastisements divinely sent came heavy upon him and upon his son. Yet God would preserve a lamp unto David, and over and over again we are reminded that this promise was not forgotten (1 Kings xi. 36; xv. 4; 2 Kings viii. 19).

After the revolt of the ten tribes, and when a forbidden form of worship had been adopted in the northern kingdom, the history follows Israel in her long line of wicked princes till sin has brought destruction, while the fortunes of David's house

are traced in such wise as to keep prominently before us the ever-preserved succession; and in the closing sentences of the Book we are told of one of the royal line still remaining, to whom, though he is still a prisoner in Babylon, mercy and kindness is shewn by the successor of that monarch who had led him away captive. 'What God hath promised to the house of David He has thus fulfilled' is the theme of the Book, and except where political and military affairs illustrate his subject the Compiler concerns himself very little with them. From a comparison with the Chronicles, we find that he has omitted whole sections of such history which lay ready to his hand.

Besides this exposition of the fulfilment of God's promises to David, the writer introduces very few other subjects with any detail, save the histories of Elijah and Elisha. These synchronise with the darkest period of the history of the ten tribes, when Baal-worship had been superadded to the worship of the calves, and they seem to be specially dealt on that it may be made manifest how great was God's long-suffering to Israel, and that His promise to Jeroboam, made in as large terms as that to David (1 Kings xi. 38), was only rendered void by a determined persistence in evil doing.

The Book of Kings, then, is not a history properly so called, but a selection from the historical documents of the nation made with a definite purpose. That the Compiler makes his extracts most faithfully we have many indications, notably that frequently-occurring phrase, 'unto this day,' a phrase true enough when the original documents from which our Compiler drew were written, but altogether inexact in B.C. 562, and only preserved because of the entire faithfulness to his copy of him who made the extracts. And the indications of such faithfulness are of the utmost importance when we come to estimate other characteristics of the Book.

The most important question of this kind which arises concerns the relation of the Book of Kings to the Pentateuch. In seeking to give an answer to such a question we have to remark how thoroughly, in nearly every chapter, the thread and tissue of the narrative is interwoven with the thoughts and phraseology

of the Books of Moses. Such a chapter as that which contains Solomon's dedication prayer is largely expressed in the words of Numbers, Leviticus and Deuteronomy. Had that chapter stood alone it might have been ascribed to some later writer familiar with the language of the Mosaic books, and if those books or a large portion of them were of late composition, the dedication prayer might also be set down as of late date. But it is not one single chapter which reechoes the Mosaic diction, resemblances of a like kind exist throughout in considerable abundance. And it is hard to believe that the Compiler of Kings, taking in hand documents which existed long before his day, some as far back as the time of Solomon himself, changed their whole character by introducing language, which, according to some, was not existent before the days of king Josiah. The work is not of such a patchwork character.

We cannot read the long address of David to Solomon to 'be strong and keep the charge of the Lord, and to walk in his ways, &c.' (1 Kings ii. 2, 3), or Solomon's injunction concerning Joab's death 'that it should take away the innocent blood' (ii. 31), or the same king's description of his people, 'one which God had chosen, a great people that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude' (iii. 8), without feeling that the thoughts and language of Numbers, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy were very familiar to writers of these chapters, chapters which are due in all probability in their substance not to the Compiler of the Books of Kings, but to Nathan the seer, Ahijah the Shilonite and Iddo the seer, quoted (2 Chron. ix. 29) as the several authorities for the records of Solomon's reign.

Again in such a history as that of the trial and execution of Naboth, the whole narrative carries us back to the laws, manners and customs which have their rise in the Books of Moses. So too do the frequent phrases which occur of such a kind as that 'the eyes and heart of God shall be perpetually upon His house'; that offending Israel 'shall be a proverb and a byword among all people, so that men shall say, Why hath the Lord done thus unto this land'; that Israel shall not intermarry with the heathen, 'Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come

in to you for surely they will turn away your hearts after their gods.' Again that proverbial phrase occurring several times over 'him that is shut up and left in Israel' has its source in Deuteronomy (xxxii. 36), whence also comes the phrase 'to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger *with their vanities*.' Allusions to the feast of the new moon (2 Kings iv. 23); to the meal offerings in the temple (2 Kings iii. 20); to the money of the guilt offerings and of the sin offerings as something which by the law belonged to the priests (2 Kings xii. 16), all bring to mind the words of Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers, where these regulations are recorded. So too with the recital of the idolatrous practices of Ahaz (2 Kings xvi.). It is entirely couched in the expressions which are found in the book of Deuteronomy, while that solemn enumeration (2 Kings xvii.) of those offences for which the northern kingdom was destroyed abounds with the phrases which are to be met with in Exodus, Leviticus and Deuteronomy. If the faithfulness of the Compiler is to be accepted as equally displayed throughout his whole work, and there is no reason why it should not be, the records from which he drew had been written by those to whom the language found in our present Books of Moses was abundantly familiar. That such a position may be accepted it is not necessary to suppose that those Books existed exactly as we have them, in the days of David and Solomon, Jehoshaphat and Hezekiah, but that there did exist something very analogous thereto, something which the redactors after the Captivity without difficulty cast into the present form.

These considerations are of much importance when we come to enquire concerning the character of that Book of the Law which we are told was found by Hilkiah in the house of the Lord while the restoration of the temple was in progress in the reign of Josiah. That the book which was found was simply the Book of Deuteronomy, an opinion held by many, is a view which appears somewhat untenable. It is spoken of as 'the Book of the Law' or 'this Book of the covenant,' a phrase used always to designate the Books of Moses as a whole, but not a portion of them or any single book by itself. Deuteronomy

was included in what was found, for the threats which are written in that book are expressly cited as making a deep impression upon the mind of Josiah, but Exodus must also have been included, for nowhere else are there found those complete and precise directions for the passover, which Josiah must have had before him when he arranged for its celebration in all its primitive order.

Josiah expressed no surprise when he was told that 'the Book of the Law' had been found, and the language of Huldah, when she was applied to, is that of one who was quite conscious of the existence of such a book. The name may have been applied at different times in the history of Israel to a collection varying in bulk, and perhaps in some portions of its form, but it was the name which was applied from the first to the laws of the people as a whole, and not to a single portion. There had existed long before Josiah's day something which had passed under the name of 'the Law of the Lord.' Its directions were given to the people by the priests, and we need not assume that the number of copies which existed was very great. But copies did exist or Huldah would not have spoken as she did, and it is an evidence that Hilkiah's book was not an invention of the priestly body in Josiah's day, that no voice is raised to dispute what is read from it, no word is uttered that points to it as something hitherto unknown. In the days of Hezekiah there cannot fail to have existed a copy to which that reforming king could refer, though his passover-celebration seems to have been less complete than that of Josiah, and it is likely that the men of Hezekiah (Prov. xxv. 1) who gathered the Proverbs of Solomon were also employed in making copies of the Law as it then existed. But in the evil days which followed Hezekiah's reign, there was inducement enough offered for those who had a knowledge of such a book to cast it away, and the temple and its services were so far abolished or neglected as to account very naturally for the disappearance of a copy which had been laid up in the house of the Lord. Josiah may never have heard more than the directions which the priests gave concerning the worship of Jehovah in the temple,

and an exact recital of the words of the covenant of God with Israel may have been entirely strange to him. What Hilkiah brought to him was an authoritative record of what hitherto he had received as tradition. The tradition had been incomplete. When the king learns the Law in greater fulness, he trembles with dread lest the curses therein denounced should fall upon him and his land because of inadequacy of the service which they had been rendering.

'The Book of the Law,' or 'the Book of the Covenant was an ancient name and not an invention of Josiah's time. The contents of that which was so called need not be supposed to have been always the same, but to have been increased in amount by the ordinances which developed from the most primitive code. What was discovered at this time was a copy of that which passed by the name 'Book of the Law' in the days of Hezekiah or even later, and the abundance of the quotations from the Books of Moses, and the great likeness to the language of those Books in the phraseology of our present Book of Kings, are evidence as good as can be desired of the existence of what we now know as Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy, in some form or other all through the times of the kingdom.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE.

Solomon king over the whole nation, 1015—975.

Reigns years	JUDAH	B.C.	ISRAEL	Reigns years
17	**Rehoboam**	975	**Jeroboam** *Jeroboam builds Penuel* (1 Kings xii. 25)	22
	Shishak plunders Jerusalem (1 Kings xiv. 25—26)			
3	**Abijam** (18th year of Jeroboam) 1 Kings xv. 1; 2 Chron. xiii. 1	957		
41	**Asa** (20th year of Jeroboam) 1 Kings xv. 9	955		
		954	**Nadab** (2nd year of Asa) 1 Kings xv. 25	2
		953	**Baasha** (3rd year of Asa) 1 Kings xv. 28	24
	War with Zerah the Ethiopian (2 Chron. xiv. 9)			
			War against Judah (2 Chron. xvi. 1)	
	Asa's alliance with Benhadad I. (1 Kings xv. 18)			
		930	**Elah** (26th year of Asa) 1 Kings xvi. 8	2
		929	**Zimri** (27th year of Asa) 1 Kings xvi. 10	7 dys.
		929	**Omri**	12
			War between Omri and Tibni 4 years[1] (1 Kings xvi. 21)	
		925	**Omri** *unopposed* (31st year of Asa) 1 Kings xvi. 23	
			Victories over the Moabites.	
			Omri builds Samaria (1 Kings xvi. 24)	
			Samaria invaded by the Syrians (1 Kings xx. 34)	
		918	**Ahab** (38th year of Asa) 1 Kings xvi. 29	22
			Ahab marries Jezebel, princess of Zidon (1 Kings xvi. 31)	

1 The duration of this war, about 4 years, must be included in the 12 years of Omri's reign (1 Kings xvi. 23). Otherwise Ahab's accession could not be in the 38th year of Asa.

Reigns years	JUDAH	B. C.	ISRAEL	Reigns years
25	**Jehoshaphat** (4th year of Ahab) 1 Kings xxii. 41	914		
			Benhadad II. attacks Samaria twice and is defeated (1 Kings xx. 29)	
			Battle at Ramoth-Gilead. Ahab slain (1 Kings xxii. 37)	
	Philistines and Arabians tributary to Judah (2 Chron. xvii. 11)	898	**Ahaziah** (17th year of Jehoshaphat) 1 Kings xxii. 51	2
			Moab regains its lost territory[2]	
		897	**Jehoram** (18th[3] year of Jehoshaphat) 2 Kings iii. 1	12
			War against Mesha king of Moab (2 Kings iii. 4—27)	
8	**Joram** (5th year of Jehoram) 2 Kings viii. 16	893		
	Revolt of Edom and Libnah (2 Kings viii. 22)			
	Judah ravaged by Philistines and Arabians (2 Chron. xxi. 17)			
1	**Ahaziah**[4] (12th year of Jehoram) 2 Kings viii. 25	885		
			Defence of Ramoth-Gilead (2 Kings ix 14)	
	Ahaziah slain by Jehu	884	*Jehoram slain by Jehu* [5]	
6	**Athaliah** (2 Kings xi. 3)	884	**Jehu** (2 Kings x. 36)	28
	The temple desecrated (2 Chron. xxiv. 7)			
40	**Joash** (7th year of Jehu) 2 Kings xi. 4; xii. 1	878		
			Israel smitten by Syria (2 Kings x. 32)	
		856	**Jehoahaz** (23rd year of Joash) 2 Kings xiii. 1	17[6]
	Hazael threatens Jerusalem (2 Kings xii. 17)			
			Continued oppression of the Syrians (2 Kings xiii. 22)	
		842	**Jehoash** (37th year of Joash) 2 Kings xiii. 10	16

2 This appears to be the time to which the conquests recorded on the Moabite stone are to be referred. The places had been won by Israel in the reign of Omri.

3 There are 3 statements concerning the commencement of the reign of Jehoram king of Israel. He is said (2 Kings i 17) to have begun to reign in the second year of Joram, king of Judah; then (2 Kings viii 16) in the fifth year before Joram; and thirdly, as noted above in the Table, in the 18th year of Jehoshaphat. On the attempts to bring these 3 dates into accord, see the notes on the several verses.

4 In 2 Kings ix. 29, the date is given as the 11th year of Jehoram. But such a variation may be accounted for by the Jewish mode of reckoning regnal years.

5 The period embraced between the accession of Jeroboam and the death of Jehoram is 91 years (975—884). That the totals of years ascribed to the kings amounts to a larger number than this is due to the counting of one and the same year as the final year of one reign and the initial year of the next. These totals are 95 for Judah and 98 for Israel. The total for Israel is greater than that for Judah because of the greater number of the accessions and the consequently greater number of the double reckonings. But if the three reigns reckoned as 2 years each in Israel, be counted, as they really were, for only one year each, the totals on both sides become the same.

6 From the 23rd year of Joash to the 37th year makes the reign of Jehoahaz to be little more than 14 years, while the length of the reign of Jehoash, from the 37th year of Joash to the 15th of Amaziah, would be somewhat more than 16 years. If we take the excess in one case to supplement the defect in the other the total time will be not far from correct.

Reigns years	JUDAH	B. C.	ISRAEL	Reigns years
29	**Amaziah**[7] (2nd year of Jehoash) 2 Kings xiv. 1	841		
			Death of Elisha (2 Kings xiii. 14)	
			Some territory recovered from Syria (2 Kings xiii. 25)	
	Edom smitten by Judah (2 Kings xiv. 7)			
	Defeat of Amaziah at Beth-shemesh (2 Kings xiv. 13)			
		826	**Jeroboam II.** (15th year of Amaziah) 2 Kings xiv. 23	41[8]
52	**Azariah**[9] (27th [?] year of Jeroboam) 2 Kings xv. 1—2	811		
			Jeroboam recovers Damascus and Hamath (2 Kings xiv 25)	
		773	**Zechariah** (38th year of Azariah) 2 Kings xv. 8	½
		772	**Shallum** (39th year of Azariah) 2 Kings xv. 13	1½
		772	**Menahem** (39th year of Azariah) 2 Kings xv. 17	10
			Pul, king of Assyria, comes against Israel	
			Menahem becomes vassal of Assyria (2 Kings xv. 19)	
	Azariah towards the close of his reign is a leper			
		761	**Pekahiah** (50th year of Azariah) 2 Kings xv. 23	2
		759	**Pekah** (52nd year of Azariah) 2 Kings xv. 27	20[10]
16	**Jotham** (2nd year of Pekah) 2 Kings xv. 32, 33	758		
16	**Ahaz** (17th year of Pekah) 2 Kings xvi. 1	742		
			Pekah and Rezin king of Damascus attack Jerusalem	
	Ahaz seeks help from Assyria (2 Kings xvi. 7)			
			Pekah's kingdom attacked by Tiglathpileser	
		730	**Hoshea** (12th year of Ahaz) 2 Kings xvii. 1	9
			Shalmaneser attacks Israel	
			Hoshea treats with So king of Egypt	
			Second attack of Shalmaneser	

7 Amaziah lived 15 years after the death of Jehoash (2 Kings xiv. 17).

8 Between the 15th year of Amaziah who reigned 29 years and the 38th of Azariah must be a period of about 52 or 53 years. Either the 41 years of text is wrong, or there was some interregnum of 11 or 12 years.

9 There is some error in this date. For Amaziah began to reign in the 2nd year of Jehoash. Jehoash reigned 16 years. So he lived about 14 years contemporary with Amaziah. The latter lived 15 years after the death of Jehoash. Thus his whole reign was 29 years. Now in the 15th year of Amaziah began Jeroboam II. to reign. Hence Amaziah must have died, and Azariah succeeded in the 14th or 15th year of Jeroboam.

10 From the 52nd year of Azariah to the 12th year of Ahaz we have 28 years at least for the reigns of Jotham and part of Ahaz. The reign of Pekah must therefore have been longer than 20 years if Hoshea immediately succeeded him. That there is some error in connexion with the dates of Pekah and Jotham is apparent from 2 Kings xv. 30—32

Reigns years	JUDAH	B. C.	ISRAEL	Reigns years
29	**Hezekiah** (3rd year of Hoshea) 2 Kings xviii. 1	726		
	Reformation of Hezekiah (2 Kings xviii. 4)			
			Sargon succeeds Shalmaneser	
		721	*Samaria taken* (6th year of Hezekiah) 2 Kings xviii. 10	
			11	
	Samaria taken in the 6th year of king Hezekiah	721		
	Sennacherib invades Judah			
	Destruction of the Assyrian army			
	Hezekiah's sickness			
	Babylonian embassy to Jerusalem			
55	**Manasseh** (2 Kings xxi. 1)	697		
	Manasseh carried captive to Babylon (2 Chron. xxxiii. 11)			
2	**Amon** (2 Kings xxi. 19)	642		
31	**Josiah** (2 Kings xxii. 1)	640		
	Restoration of the temple			
	Finding of the book of the Law			
	Abolition of all idolatry			
	Great celebration of the Passover			
	Pharaoh-necoh comes against Assyria			
	Josiah slain at Megiddo			
¼	**Jehoahaz** (2 Kings xxiii. 31)	609		
	Pharaoh-necoh carries Jehoahaz captive (2 Kings xxiii. 33)			
11	**Jehoiakim** (2 Kings xxiii. 36)	609		
	Jehoiakim tributary to Egypt (2 Kings xxiii. 35)			
	Afterwards tributary to Assyria (2 Kings xxiv. 1)			
	Judah attacked by Chaldæans, Syrians, Moabites and Ammonites			
¼	**Jehoiachin** (2 Kings xxiv. 8)	598		
	Egyptians driven back by the Babylonians (2 Kings xxiv. 7)			
	Jehoiachin taken captive to Babylon (2 Kings xxiv. 12)			
11	**Zedekiah** (2 Kings xxiv. 18)	598		
	Jerusalem besieged by Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings xxv. 1)	589		
	Capture and destruction of Jerusalem	587		
	Gedaliah appointed governor (2 Kings xxv. 22)			
	The residue of the Jews flee unto Egypt (2 Kings xxv. 26)			
	Jehoiachin kindly treated by Evil-Merodach	562		

11 The period from the accession of Jehu to the captivity of the 10 tribes embraces 163 years. The total of the regnal years of the kings of Judah amounts to 165, a difference easily introduced by the counting the same year twice over at the end of a reign and the beginning of another. But the regnal years assigned to the kings of Israel are little more than 143. Thus it is clear that about 20 years must be added, and this accords with the necessity seen above of giving 12 years more between Jeroboam II. and Zechariah, and 8 years more between Pekah and Hoshea.

THE

SECOND BOOK OF THE KINGS,

COMMONLY CALLED,

THE FOURTH BOOK OF THE KINGS.

THEN Moab rebelled against Israel after the death of **1**
Ahab. And Ahaziah fell down through a lattice in his **2**

CH. I. 1—18. SICKNESS OF AHAZIAH, KING OF ISRAEL. HIS MESSENGERS SENT TO ENQUIRE OF BAALZEBUB ARE DESTROYED BY ELIJAH. AHAZIAH DYING IS SUCCEEDED BY HIS BROTHER JEHORAM. (Not in Chronicles.)

1. *Then* [R.V. **And**] *Moab rebelled against Israel*] The conjunction is the simple copulative. The less severance that is made between the portion of Ahaziah's history in 1 Kings and that which is given in this chapter the better. The so-called two books of Kings are but one, and the division has been made quite arbitrarily and in the middle of a reign.

We have no record in Scripture how Moab came to be subject to Israel; but the inscription on the Moabite stone shews us that Israel and Moab were in conflict in the days of Omri, Ahab's father. Of their previous subjugation by David we read 2 Sam. viii. 2, after which we have no mention of them till this passage. It is by no means improbable that on the secession of the ten tribes, the Moabites became subjects of Israel, as the tribes on the east of Jordan all appertained to the northern kingdom. The death of Ahab, and the national prostration of the Israelites after their defeat at Ramoth Gilead would be counted a good opportunity for the Moabites to strike a blow for their freedom. The heavy burden laid upon them is seen from 2 Kings iii. 4 where their tribute is specified as 'an hundred thousand lambs and an hundred thousand rams with their wool'. Cf. also Is. xvi. 1. We know from the history of the settlement of the Israelites (Numb. xxxii. 1—4) how well suited for cattle rearing were some parts of the Transjordanic country. From the nature of the Moabite tribute it is very likely that their whole wealth was in their flocks and herds.

after the death of Ahab] Ahab's death was quite unexpected, and perhaps no long time elapsed between that event and Ahaziah's fall. Affairs were sure to be out of joint, and would invite subjects who felt their yoke heavy to try and cast it off.

2. *And Ahaziah fell down through a* [R.V. **the**] *lattice*] From the

upper chamber that *was* in Samaria, and was sick: and he sent messengers, and said unto them, Go, inquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron whether I shall recover of this
3 disease. But the angel of the LORD said to Elijah the Tishbite, Arise, go up to meet the messengers of the king

use of the word rendered 'lattice' elsewhere (cf. Job xviii. 8), it must mean some kind of net or trellis-work put in front of an open space, a window or a balcony. As it is said the king fell *through* it, we may most probably conclude that an Oriental window space with its trellis-work is intended. The description of it as 'in his upper chamber' shews that it cannot have been a palisade round the flat roof of the house, as some have thought, which broke away as he was leaning on it, and let him fall down. Josephus (*Ant.* IX. 2. 1) represents the king as having fallen as he was coming down from the housetop.

and was sick] The verb is employed, as here, of sickness caused by wounds, and also of ordinary disease (cf. 2 Kings xiii. 14) as in the case of Elisha. It is also used metaphorically (cf. Song ii. 5; v. 8).

inquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron] The son of Jezebel follows his mother's example in his adherence to false gods. It was probably because Ekron was the nearest shrine of such a divinity that Ahaziah was sending thither. Ekron was the most northern of the five great Philistine cities, and so most easily within reach from Samaria. It is not possible to say, from the form of the two Hebrew words which make up the name Baal-zebub, whether they are in construction or in apposition. The latter word signifies 'a fly', and the LXX. taking them as in apposition rendered 'Baal, the fly', as though the image of the god had been in that form, just as Dagon's image, in the neighbouring Ashdod, was in part at least like a fish. But it seems more natural to regard the words as in construction, so that 'the Baal (or lord) of flies' would be an epithet implying that the god was supposed to be an averter of flies, these insects being, especially in hot countries, a very serious pest. Such among the Greeks was Ζεὺς ἀπόμυιος (Paus. v. 14. 2), and among the Romans a deity supposed to possess this fly-dispelling power was named 'Myiagrus' and 'Myiodes' =the fly catcher. (Plin. x. 28. 40; xxix. 6. 34.)

whether I shall recover of this disease] R. V. **sickness**. The noun is from the same root as the verb rendered 'was sick', just before. There must have been some oracle at Ekron, for it was an answer that Ahaziah sought. He did not send his messengers to make supplication for his recovery. The LXX. adds at the close of this verse 'and they went to inquire concerning him'.

3. *Elijah the Tishbite*] See on 1 Kings xvii. 1. For a similar message to the prophet cf. 1 Kings xxi. 17. We know from 2 Kings iv. 25 that Elisha was often to be found on Mt Carmel where there was most likely a school of the prophets (see 2 Kings ii. 25). It may be that Elijah also made his most settled dwelling there. At this time he went and took up a position on some height (see below, verse 9)

of Samaria, and say unto them, *Is it* not because *there is* not a God in Israel, *that* ye go to inquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron? Now therefore thus saith the LORD, Thou shalt 4
not come down from *that* bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die. And Elijah departed. And when the 5
messengers turned back unto him, he said unto them, Why are ye now turned back? And they said unto him, There 6

which commanded the road by which the messengers were journeying from Samaria to Ekron.

the king of Samaria] When the city of Samaria had been built and made the royal residence, the name 'Samaria' soon came to be used as the equivalent of 'Israel' for the kingdom of the ten tribes. See before 1 Kings xxi. 1.

Is it *not because* there is *not a God in Israel*] R.V. **Is it because there is no God in Israel.** The Hebrew could employ a double negative, as the Greek sometimes does, but the sense intended is given in English by the single one. This rendering the A. V. employs in Exod. xiv. 11 where the original is in the same form as in the verse before us: 'Because there were no graves in Egypt'; and for a similar double negative in the Hebrew of Eccles. iii. 11 the A.V. gives 'so that no man can find out'. The same form of phrase is repeated below in verses 6 and 16.

The LXX. takes away the first word of the Hebrew in the next sentence, וְלָכֵן = *Now therefore*, from its connexion and renders it as a separate phrase, and as if it had been וְלֹא כֵן = καὶ οὐχ οὕτως, putting ὅτι, which has nothing to represent it in the Hebrew, as the connecting particle of the next clause. The same misreading occurs in verses 6 and 16.

4. *And Elijah departed*] i.e. to fulfil the command which had been given him by the angel. The LXX. adds 'and spake unto them'. The compiler of the Kings leaves out here any mention of the first meeting of the messengers by the prophet, because it may be assumed that what the prophet was bidden to do, he did.

5. *And when the messengers turned back unto him, he said*] More literally with R.V., **And the messengers returned unto him and he said.** The pronoun refers to the sick king in Samaria. They could only have gone a little way on their journey, and their early reappearance caused him some surprise.

'The errand is soon done. The messengers are returned ere they go. Not a little were they amazed to hear their secret message from another's mouth, neither could they choose but think: He that can tell what Ahaziah said, what he thought, can foretell how he shall speed. We have met with a greater god than we went to seek. What need we inquire for another answer?' (Bp Hall's *Contemplations*).

Why are ye now turned back?] To accord with the previous clause, render with R.V., **Why is it that ye are returned?**

came a man up to meet us, and said unto us, Go, turn again unto the king that sent you, and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD, *Is it* not because *there is* not a God in Israel, *that* thou sendest to inquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron? therefore thou shalt not come down from *that* bed on which
7 thou art gone up, but shalt surely die. And he said unto them, What manner of man *was he* which came up to meet
8 you, and told you these words? And they answered him, *He was* a hairy man, and girt *with* a girdle of leather about
9 his loins. And he said, It *is* Elijah the Tishbite. Then the king sent unto him a captain of fifty with his fifty. And

6. *There came a man up to meet*] The R.V. puts 'up' before 'a man', because the Hebrew verb signifies 'to come up'. So in A.V. in the next verse. It would appear as though the prophet had met the messengers very early in their journey while they were going down from the hill on which Samaria was built. They did not know Elijah, for he, like John the Baptist afterwards, was not one of those who were to be found in kings' houses. And the messengers were most likely some of the persons in close attendance on the king.

Go, turn again &c.] These words are not in verse 3, but they are natural as a preface to the message there given.

that *thou sendest*] Elijah speaking to the messengers (*v.* 3) would naturally say 'that ye go', but they put the words into a form suitable to their position as servants obeying an order. Yet we can see from some parts of the narrative which follows that some of the king's servants were willing enough to follow where he led them.

7. *What manner of man* was he?] The Hebrew noun which is usually rendered 'judgement' is applied sometimes to external appearances of things. Thus Exod. xxvi. 30, 'Thou shalt rear up the tabernacle according to the *fashion* thereof which was shewed thee'. From the answer of the messengers it is clear that the dress and external peculiarities are what is here meant. From them Ahaziah was able to *judge* who the man must be.

8. He was *a hairy man*] Literally, 'lord, i.e. possessor, of hair'. This might equally be used of the long hair of the head and beard, or of the shaggy cloak of hair worn as a garment. But when we know of him who came 'in the spirit and power of Elijah' that 'his *raiment* was of camel's hair and a leathern girdle about his loins', it seems better to accept the expression as a description of Elijah's dress. We know too that the prophets (Zech. xiii. 4) did wear a mantle of hair, probably adopted from the garb of this greatest among them, Elijah.

It is *Elijah the Tishbite*] Though the messengers might not know the prophet, the king, from his father's experience, must have heard a great deal about Elijah, and of his appearance and dress.

9. *Then the king sent unto him*] Clearly Ahaziah's design was to

he went up to him: and behold, he sat on the top of a hill. And he spake unto him, Thou man of God, the king hath said, Come down. And Elijah answered and said to the 10
captain of fifty, If I *be* a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And there came down fire from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty. Again also he sent unto him another captain of fifty 11
with his fifty. And he answered and said unto him, O man

arrest and punish Elijah, but considering that the prophet had appeared alone, the number of men sent out against him seems excessive. It may be, however, that in the brevity of the narrative we are not told of Elijah's movements, and that he had already retired to some centre of the prophetic body; and if so, the king may have apprehended that resistance would be offered to his arrest.

a captain of fifty] One of the subdivisions of the Jewish army was into 'fifties'. See 1 Sam. viii. 12. Greater bodies were 'hundreds' and 'thousands' (Num. xxxi. 14).

he sat on the top of a [R.V. **the**] *hill*] The word rendered 'sat' may also be translated 'dwelt' (see marg. of R.V.) and the definite article indicates that some particular hill is intended, therefore the suggestion that Elijah had already withdrawn to Carmel, and that the soldiers followed him thither, is most likely correct.

Thou [R.V. **O**] *man of God*] The original is precisely as in verse 13. But in the two first addresses the title was given no doubt in mockery. In the mouth of one who really felt the force of the words there could have followed them no such sentence as 'the king hath said, Come down'. For a contrast see 1 Kings xvii. 18, 24.

10. *If I* be *a man of God*] The spirit of the Law differs from that of the Gospel, and our Lord forbad (Luke ix. 55) his disciples the wish to imitate Elijah. But in the light which he had, Elijah felt that the majesty of Jehovah was outraged, when the name 'man of God', which should have signified reverence, was used as a term of scorn. And in the spirit of the Law he calls on God to make manifest that His servants and His message may not lightly be despised. And God in His discipline of the world granted the prophet's prayer. Bp Hall says 'There are few tracks of Elijah that are ordinary and fit for common feet. His actions are more for wonder than for precedent. Not in his own defence would the prophet have been the death of so many, if God had not, by a peculiar instinct, made him an instrument of this just vengeance'.

11. *Again also* [R.V. **And again**] *he sent*] Ahaziah has no regard for the lives that have been sacrificed. Josephus pictures him as 'exceedingly angry when the destruction of these fifty was made known to him' (*Ant.* IX. 2. 1). Probably also his fierceness was aggravated by his hopeless sickness.

And he answered] The verbs which signify 'to answer' are used both

12 of God, thus hath the king said, Come down quickly. And
Elijah answered and said unto them, If I *be* a man of God,
let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy
fifty. And the fire of God came down from heaven, and
13 consumed him and his fifty. And he sent again a captain
of the third fifty with his fifty. And the third captain of
fifty went up, and came and fell on his knees before Elijah,
and besought him, and said unto him, O man of God, I
pray thee, let my life, and the life of these fifty thy servants,
14 be precious in thy sight. Behold, there came fire down
from heaven, and burnt up the two captains of the former
fifties with their fifties: therefore let my life now be precious
15 in thy sight. And the angel of the LORD said unto Elijah,
Go down with him: be not afraid of him. And he arose,

in Hebrew and in Greek for remarks made where, as here, no question has been asked.

Come down quickly] The second captain goes in the spirit of the king and adds to the message of the first the demand of speedy obedience. We may therefore consider that his punishment was more deserved than that of the former. But the narrative makes it quite clear that both by the king and his people Jehovah was forgotten, and that some signal mark of His anger was called for to check the wandering after other gods, which had grown up out of Jeroboam's sin.

13. *a captain of the* [R.V. a] *third fifty*] The LXX. omits the number 'third', and the grammar in the Hebrew is not quite regular.

came and fell on his knees] He utters no command, but as a suppliant recognises the power of which Elijah was the representative. Josephus makes him admit that he has only come because the king commanded it.

be precious in thy sight] A common phrase about a life that is spared. Cf. 1 Sam. xxvi. 21; Ps. lxxii. 14.

14. *Behold, there came fire down from heaven*] Here is another point in which the brevity of the narrative leaves much for conjecture. How was the news of the first and second destruction brought, and its nature described? The sending out of an armed band would no doubt attract attention, and persons who were near at hand when the meeting with the prophet took place may have brought the news. Was the second captain sent on his errand without any knowledge of what had happened to his predecessor?

15. *be not afraid of him*] Some have taken the pronoun here to refer to the captain. This can hardly be correct. The third messenger was all humility and entreaty, and the only person to be feared was the king Ahaziah, irate because of the destruction of his soldiers and the defiance of his authority.

and went down with him unto the king. And he said unto 16
him, Thus saith the LORD, Forasmuch as thou hast sent
messengers to inquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron, *is it*
not because *there is* no God in Israel to inquire of his word?
therefore thou shalt not come down off *that* bed on which
thou art gone up, but shalt surely die. So he died accord- 17
ing to the word of the LORD which Elijah had spoken.
And Jehoram reigned in his stead in the second year of
Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah; because he

17. *So he died*] The whole narrative bears marks of extreme simplicity. Nothing but the barest facts are given, and no attempt made to explain or account for any part of the history. The touches which Josephus adds to the story mark the difference between the early and the later record. He describes the hasty return of the messengers and the king's astonishment thereat. They relate how the prophet had hindered their further journey. The first captain threatens force to the prophet if he refuse to obey the king's order, and the second is equally imperative. The third captain is described as prudent and exceeding gentle in disposition, and as speaking friendly to Elijah, and explaining that he himself, as well as the other two bands had only come because they were forced to do so, and that this, of course, the prophet knew. The language and demeanour were acceptable to Elijah and so he followed the captain to Samaria.

which Elijah had spoken] We are told nothing of what must have been a most solemn interview, nor how it came to pass that the prophet was allowed to go without any punishment. Elijah disappears, as is usual in the history, without a word to tell us of his whereabouts.

And Jehoram reigned in his stead] This was the brother of Ahaziah. The LXX. omits in this verse 'And Jehoram...no son.' But instead of it after verse 18 there is a long addition, substantially like iii. 1—3 below, but the LXX. has the same words in that place also.

in the second year of Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah] It is extremely difficult to make this statement fit with the rest of the chronological details of the books of Kings. The accession of Jehoram of Israel is here fixed in the second year of Jehoram of Judah, but in 2 Kings iii. 1 the same event is assigned to the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah. Now Jehoshaphat reigned 25 years (1 Kings xxii. 42). If therefore the two statements are correct Jehoram of Judah must, in some form or other, have been counted as king along with his father from about the 17th year of Jehoshaphat's reign. But according to 2 Kings viii. 16, it was in the 5th year of Jehoram of Israel that Jehoram of Judah began his reign. This of course must refer to his independent reign. But Jehoshaphat's reign of 25 years causes some difficulty, unless we suppose, as the Jews are said to have reckoned, that 25 years might really be only 23 and small portions of 2 other years. Then Jehoram of Israel, who began to reign in the

18 had no son. Now the rest of the acts of Ahaziah which he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

2 And it came to pass, when the LORD would take up Elijah *into* heaven by a whirlwind, that Elijah went with

18th year of Jehoshaphat, might have reigned little more than 5 years when Jehoshaphat died, and when Jehoram of Judah began the 8 years of his independent reign, he having reigned about the same period along with his father Jehoshaphat. This is the generally accepted settlement of the dates, but the chronology of the two kingdoms is far from being clearly marked. Nor is there satisfactory evidence that a son was ever king along with his father.

CH. II. 1—18. ELIJAH IS CARRIED UP INTO HEAVEN. THE SPIRIT OF ELIJAH RESTS ON ELISHA. HIS FIRST PROPHETIC APPEARANCE. (Not in Chronicles.)

1. *when the Lord would take up Elijah*] The whole of the following narrative about Elijah's assumption must be drawn from what was communicated by Elisha. It was probably collected by some among the sons of the prophets, and added to the previous record of Elijah's life. The insertion of the history here would appear, from 2 Chron. xxi. 12—15, to be a departure from the strict order of events. Jehoshaphat king of Judah is still alive, and in the next chapter we shall find an account of his expedition, in conjunction with Jehoram of Israel against the Moabites. In the passage just cited, however, the Chronicler tells of a letter which Elijah sent to Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, at a time, as it appears, after his father's death. Jehoram had risen up to the kingdom of his father and had slain all his brethren with the sword, and was walking in the ways of the northern kings of the house of Ahab. The letter was to warn him of the punishment which awaited his evil deeds. We can hardly place such acts as are there described during the period in which Jehoram was as it seems associated with Jehoshaphat in the kingdom. The father must have been dead ere one brother could slay all the rest of the family. The margin of the A. V. in 2 Chron. xxi. 12 describes Elijah's letter as 'writ before his death', apparently with the meaning that it was prepared by prophetic foreknowledge and sent by some one else when the time came that its warning was needed. It seems much more likely that the compiler of Kings decided to make his history of Elijah complete before he went on to other matters, and has by so doing put the final scene of the prophet's earthly life a little earlier than its proper place in the history.

into *heaven by a whirlwind*] The R. V., to preserve the same order of words as the original, has 'by a whirlwind into heaven'. The writer uses the figure which most nearly describes such a manifestation as that by which Elijah was translated. Human speech must of course fail to convey a true picture of so sublime a scene.

Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal] No mention of Elisha as Elijah's companion is given in the history between the day of Elisha's

Elisha from Gilgal. And Elijah said unto Elisha, Tarry 2
here, I pray thee; for the LORD hath sent me to Beth-el.
And Elisha said *unto him*, *As* the LORD liveth, and *as* thy
soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they went down *to*

call and the time of the events in this chapter. But in 1 Kings xix. 21 we read that Elisha 'ministered unto' Elijah, and in 2 Kings iii. 11 he is called 'Elisha the son of Shaphat which poured water on the hands of Elijah': i.e. who performed for the aged prophet such services as a young attendant could yield to his master. We may therefore conclude that Elisha's time had been mainly spent in Elijah's company. The 'Gilgal' spoken of here must be a different place from that so named in Josh. iv. 19; v. 9, 10. That was situate in the Jordan valley and not very far from Jericho. But here the travellers are described (verse 2) as 'going *down*' from Gilgal to Bethel. There is however another place of the same name in the hill country of Ephraim, which is also the place alluded to in Deut. xi. 30 and is now known as *Jiljilia*, and by making this the starting-point of Elijah's last journey, the description in the text becomes quite accurate, for that place stands considerably higher than Bethel. It is known from 2 Kings iv. 38 that at Gilgal there was a colony of the prophets. At the time when he was to be translated Elijah was probably dwelling among the prophetic body, and passed to the other two centres, Bethel and Jericho, that to them he might leave the precious memory of a visit on the last day when he was seen on earth. 'For a meet farewell to the earth, Elijah will go visit the schools of the prophets, before his departure. These were in his way: of any part of earth, they were nearest unto heaven' (Bp Hall).

2. *Tarry here*] Not only was Elijah himself conscious of some great event at hand but Elisha and the bands of prophets in Bethel and Jericho had an intimation that the departure of Elijah was very near. But the subject is too solemn for words. The two chief persons do not speak of it, and it is only when the separation is just about to take place that direct allusion is made to it (verse 9). We can see however in Elijah's request, here and afterwards, that Elisha should stay behind how awful the immediate future appeared to him, and in Elisha's persistence the great love which the disciple felt for his master. Elijah, feeling that soon he was to stand before God, and was drawing near to the gate of heaven, would save his disciple from the sight of a glory on which man, as the Jew felt, cannot gaze and live, while Elisha is resolved that nothing but the last necessity shall take him from his master's side.

the Lord hath sent me to [R. V. more precisely, **as far as**] *Beth-el*] The whole journey has been marked out for him, and devised that those who were to carry on the work after Elijah's departure might at this last interview see, and remember hereafter, the last looks, fixed on heaven, and the last words, though they seem to have been but few, spoken, of him who had been their guide and father for a long while and amid constant perils.

As *the Lord liveth, and* as *thy soul liveth*] The combination of the

3 Beth-el. And the sons of the prophets that *were at* Beth-el
came forth to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that
the LORD will take away thy master from thy head to day?
4 And he said, Yea, I know *it;* hold you your peace. And

two phrases imparts much solemnity to the resolve. They are not unfrequently found apart. Thus 'As the Lord liveth' occurs alone in Judges viii. 19; Ruth iii. 13; 1 Sam. xiv. 39 &c., and 'As thy soul liveth' in 1 Sam. i. 26; xvii. 55; 2 Sam. xiv. 19 &c. Beside the places in this chapter the double form is found in 1 Sam. xx. 3; xxv. 26 and is expressive of the most intense earnestness. Elisha's master may be withdrawn from him: he will not be withdrawn from his master.

3. *the sons of the prophets*] They were called 'sons' in the same way as Elisha calls Elijah 'father'. See below verse 12. Whether the prophetic body in Gilgal had been warned before Elijah's departure from them that they would see him no more we are not told; but it seems highly probable that it was so from what is said of Bethel and of Jericho. Thus Elisha started on his journey prepared for what its end would be.

Beth-el] This was the city which in old time had been called Luz (Josh. xviii. 13) though from one passage (Josh. xvi. 2) there seems to have been a distinction between Bethel and Luz, as though the latter had been the old town, and the former a sacred spot near to it. It lay in the northern part of the tribe of Benjamin, and when the kingdoms were divided and Jeroboam set up the calf-worship in Israel, Bethel was constituted the southern sanctuary. Perhaps it was as a protest against this worship that the sons of the prophets made one of their centres in Bethel. It was at Bethel that the voice of God's prophet was first raised against Jeroboam's altar (1 Kings xiii. 1).

came forth to Elisha] The solemn event of which they had been forewarned checks them from addressing Elijah. His thoughts must have been all absorbed in meditation on the revelation which he was so soon to experience, and heaven, not earth, nor the things of earth, was in his mind. Silence when God is so near is the only homage man can pay.

the Lord will take away thy master from thy head to day] We can see from this language that the communion between Elijah and Elisha had been much closer than that which the aged prophet had held with the other sons of the prophets. Hence he is rather spoken of as Elisha's master, than theirs. This is what we should expect from the special way in which Elisha was appointed (1 Kings xix. 16). The prophetic bodies were therefore prepared to accept Elisha as their head, when Elijah had been taken away.

hold you your peace] Elisha had marked the solemn and meditative frame of his master's mind, and would not have it disturbed by any prolonged conversation between himself and the sons of the prophets. He cannot bear the questioning. He thinks of his own weakness and of the terrible burden which will be laid upon him when he is left alone without the friend on whom he has hitherto leaned.

Elijah said unto him, Elisha, tarry here, I pray thee; for the LORD hath sent me *to* Jericho. And he said, *As* the LORD liveth, and *as* thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they came *to* Jericho. And the sons of the prophets 5
that *were* at Jericho came to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the LORD will take away thy master from thy head to day? And he answered, Yea, I know *it;* hold you your peace. And Elijah said unto him, Tarry, I 6
pray thee, here; for the LORD hath sent me to Jordan. And he said, *As* the LORD liveth, and *as* thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And they two went on. And fifty men of 7
the sons of the prophets went, and stood to view afar off:

4. *hath sent me to Jericho*] The famous city which played a part in the history of Israel from their first entry into Canaan. It had been rebuilt in Ahab's reign (1 Kings xvi. 34) in spite of the divine curse pronounced in Joshua's time on any who should restore it (Josh. vi. 26). And now it had been chosen as the seat of one of the prophetic colleges.

6. *to Jordan*] The journey tends across the river to that part of the country whither Elijah had at first fled for fear of Ahab. In that same land of Gilead, which was Elijah's birthplace (1 Kings xvii. 1) and whither we find the prophet's first flight directed (1 Kings xvii. 2, 3), it is to be the scene of his assumption into heaven.

they two went on] It was felt by the whole prophetic band that none but the faithful minister could presume to go as Elijah's companion at such a moment. They watched the departing master and servant, standing only afar off, if perchance they might be allowed to witness something more of the approaching separation.

7. *And fifty men*] It is not without surprise that we come at one single centre upon so large a body of men devoting themselves to a holy life in the service of Jehovah, while Ahab's children are still on the throne of Israel. There seems also to have been, beside Jericho and Bethel, similar colleges at Gilgal and perhaps on Carmel. It would almost appear as though all those who were true adherents of the Lord had betaken themselves to this life of retirement, that they might escape from the evils which followed so thick in the train of the worship of the Baalim.

stood to view] R. V. **over against them**, and similarly in verse 15. This rendering stands also as one margin of the A. V. The Hebrew word [*neged*] originally signifies 'in front' of anything; but since we are *in front* of anything which faces us, and it may be said to be in front of us, the adverb in the text has a double use. Here it refers to the position of the sons of the prophets as they stood looking towards the departing couple, while in the next chapter (iii. 22) it is applied to the blood which the Moabites supposed they saw 'on the other side' of the valley. R. V. has 'over against them' in that verse also.

8 and they two stood by Jordan. And Elijah took his mantle,
and wrapt *it* together, and smote the waters, and they were
divided hither and thither, so that they two went over on
9 dry *ground*. And it came to pass, when they were gone
over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for
thee, before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said,
I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me.
10 And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing: *nevertheless*, if

8. *And Elijah took his mantle*] In i. 8 the mantle was not mentioned, but the word here is the same as in Zech. xiii. 4, so that there can be little doubt that the expression 'hairy man' above refers to the garment, and not to the head and beard.

and wrapt it *together*] Making thus a sort of roll or rod, and reminding us by his action of Moses, who smote with his rod the waters of the Nile (Exod. vii. 17, 20) when they were to be turned into blood.

9. *when they were gone over*] Or, with margin of R. V., 'as they went over'. There was now no other place to visit, and the end was felt to be close at hand. Both probably thought how near they were coming to the spot where the earlier prophet Moses had been taken from the earth. In crossing the Jordan Elijah stood again on the slopes of his native Gilead. Was he impelled by that strong desire which so often makes men wish to die among the scenes of their childhood?

before I be taken away from thee] R. V. omits 'away', rather inconsistently, for 'take away' is kept as the rendering of the same verb in verses 3 and 5.

The subject which had been filling both their hearts, the approaching separation, is at last mentioned. The master would help in whatever way he could the disciple who has been chosen to fill his place; and the question tests the character of Elisha. It shews that he felt that he must act with the same undaunted courage and boldness, and that he knew the needs of the times.

let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me] The request is not, as some have thought, for twice the spirit of the departing master. And the attempts which have been made to shew that in some ways Elisha went beyond Elijah are utterly pointless. What Elisha wants is what a father may rightly give to a firstborn son. In Deut. xxi. 17 it is prescribed that to the firstborn shall be given a double portion of all which the father possesses, so that he may have twice as much as each of the other sons. But we are not to think here of the whole of the schools of the prophets as sharing in the gift which Elijah was to bestow. Such slavery to the letter is absurd. What Elisha longs for is such a blessing as will shew that he is esteemed as the dearest member of that band whom Elijah had most trusted.

10. *Thou hast asked a hard thing*] Because it was not Elijah's to bestow. He knew that except for God's strengthening power and comforting revelations his own heart would often have fainted. He therefore leaves the result to depend on God's judgement. If He permit

thou see me *when I am* taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be *so*. And it came to pass, *as* 11
they still went on, and talked, that behold, *there appeared* a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind *into* heaven. And Elisha saw *it*, and he cried, My father, my father, the 12
chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof. And he saw him no more: and he took hold of his own clothes, and

Elisha to behold the assumption, then it shall be for a token that the petition is granted, and Elisha counted worthy to be blessed as he desires.

11. as *they still went on, and talked*] Elisha is to remain to the last. And now that the silence has been broken, and the request made, we can understand how much Elijah would find of exhortation and encouragement to bestow as parting counsels on his successor.

a chariot of fire, and horses of fire] Compare with this description the notice of the sight which Elisha's servant (2 Kings vi. 17) was permitted to behold, when he was terrified by the king of Syria's hosts. 'The mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.' There it was in answer to Elisha's prayer, 'Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes that he may see', that the encouraging enlightenment was vouchsafed. And here we may well think that it was of God's grace and as an assurance that Elisha should receive his petition, that his eyes were opened to behold the glory which carried away his master. Henceforth he was sure that that power was constantly near God's servants, and could say with firm assurance, 'They that be with us are more than they which be with them'. The vision was a source of strength and encouragement in the labours which were before him with no master at his head. He learnt the source of his master's spirit.

12. *My father, my father*] That this title of affection was given by the younger prophets to an elder seems clear from 1 Sam. x. 12, where the question 'Who is their father?' appears to refer to Samuel, and the whole passage to shew that men need not be surprised at Saul being among the prophets, if they only know that he is coming from close communication with Samuel. The use of the title 'father' suits perfectly with the request that has just been made for the share which falls to the firstborn.

the chariot [R.V. **chariots**] *of Israel, and the horsemen thereof*] These words are in apposition with the former clause, and mark the sense which Elisha had of the protection afforded to the land by the presence of Elijah. Horses and chariots might be prepared in abundance, but they who had God's prophet as their guide, and his voice lifted to heaven for their help, were guarded by a might against which armies were powerless. Though the noun in the Hebrew is in the singular, it has a plural sense here, and signifies 'the chariotry', the mounted force of the nation, to which Elijah's presence is here compared.

and he took hold of his own clothes, and rent them] Grief prevailing

13 rent them in two pieces. He took up also the mantle of
Elijah that fell from him, and went back, and stood by the
14 bank of Jordan; and he took the mantle of Elijah that
fell from him, and smote the waters, and said, Where *is*
the LORD God of Elijah? and when he also had smitten the

over every other feeling, and the Oriental demonstrativeness being uncontrollable even in the lonely gorges of Gilead.

We may compare this 'taking away' with the translation of Enoch, and the Ascension of Christ, as marking the three periods of the world's history, giving witness to each of man's immortality, but in very different degrees.

13. *He took up also the mantle of Elijah*] Not with any view of using it as clothing, but as a precious memento of the departed master, and as a sort of pledge of the promise which had been made to him. This heirloom was taken of the inheritance on which he was now about to enter.

14. *and smote the waters*] He acts upon the faith that he would receive from God the power which he had desired. He is in a degree to represent Elijah and therefore he acts as Elijah had done. After these words the Complutensian text of the LXX. gives καὶ οὐ διῃρέθη, 'and they were not divided'. This is represented also in the Vulgate 'percussit aquas et non sunt divisæ'. To explain this it has been said that at first Elisha took the mantle, and wrapping it together smote the waters, without any words, expecting the virtue to make itself apparent at once. When no effect was thus produced he then called upon Jehovah and the waters parted asunder. As there is no warrant in any Hebrew text for the words added in the Greek and Latin it is needless to point out that the above explanation is of no authority.

Where is *the Lord God* [R. V. **the God**] *of Elijah?*] The question does not imply any doubt of God's presence, of which Elisha had so lately seen a manifestation; but should rather be explained as an entreaty for His power to shew itself and give a foretaste of the spirit of Elijah which had been promised. 'As if he had said: Lord God, it was thy promise to me by my departed master, that if I should see him in his last passage, a double portion of his spirit should be upon me. I followed him with my eyes in that fire and whirlwind; now therefore, O God, make good thy gracious word unto thy servant: make this the first proof of the miraculous power wherewith thou shalt endow me. Let Jordan give the same way to me as it gave to my master' (Bp Hall).

But at this point there is a difficulty in the Hebrew text. Immediately following the question just noticed come two words אַף־הוּא which the Massoretic pointing connects with what follows, and which the A.V. (and many later authorities) renders by 'he also'. The next word in the Hebrew = 'and he smote'. It is apparent at once that the collocation 'he also and he smote' can only by an act of some violence

waters, they parted hither and thither: and Elisha went over. And when the sons of the prophets which *were* to 15
view at Jericho saw him, they said, The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha. And they came to meet him, and bowed themselves to the ground before him. And they said unto 16
him, Behold now, there be with thy servants fifty strong men; let them go, we pray thee, and seek thy master: lest

be rendered 'and when he also had smitten'. But if the Massoretic text be adhered to, this is the only solution, and it has been retained in the text of the R. V. by the rule which fixed the accepted text as that which was to be translated. On the margin however the Revisers give 'the God of Elijah, even He?' thus combining the two Hebrew words which cause the difficulty with the first portion of the sentence, and continuing 'And when he had smitten &c.' This, though not without some awkwardness, for אַף־הוּא nowhere else is found in the sense of 'even he', yet seems better than the solution of the A. V. The LXX. merely transliterated the difficult words by *ἀφφώ*, and some interpreters of the Greek have treated this as a mysterious name of Jehovah, placed in apposition with 'the God of Elijah'. There is another Hebrew word אֲבוֹא = now, which in 2 Kings x. 10 the LXX. represents in the same way by *ἀφφώ*. Hence some have proposed that that word should be read here, and so the Massoretic pointing preserved. This would be rendered 'Where is *now* the Lord God of Elijah?' The margin of R.V. though not free from difficulty seems the rendering to be preferred.

they parted [R. V. **were divided**] *hither and thither*] The word **is** the same as in verse 8. By this the Lord confirmed the promise made to Elisha by Elijah, and shewed that the spirit of the master had been bestowed on the disciple.

15. *which* were *to view at Jericho*] R. V. **which were at Jericho over against him.** See above on verse 7. They were in a position from which they could see him, and he might see them.

bowed themselves to the ground] Thus expressing their acknowledgement of him as their head, and the divinely appointed successor of Elijah. 'It was not the outside of Elijah which they had wont to stoop unto with so much veneration; it was his spirit, which since they now find in another subject, they entertain with equal reverence. No envy, no emulation raiseth up their stomachs against Elijah's servant; but where they see eminent graces, they are willingly prostrate' (Bp Hall).

16. *there be with thy servants fifty strong men*] Doubtless some from among the company of the prophets are meant. In chapter vi. 1—4 they are described as men equal to the labour of felling trees, and doing the work of building. We cannot suppose that in such a society there were many persons retained for the service of the college. As Elisha served Elijah, so they did all that was needful for themselves.

seek thy master] Throughout the narrative there is implied a much

peradventure the spirit of the LORD hath taken him up, and cast him upon some mountain, or into some valley. And
17 he said, Ye shall not send. And when they urged him till *he* was ashamed, he said, Send. They sent therefore fifty
18 men; and they sought three days, but found him not. And

closer connexion between Elijah and Elisha than between Elijah and the rest. He is 'thy master' not 'our master'.

the spirit of the Lord hath taken him up] Compare 1 Kings xviii. 12, where Obadiah speaks of the spirit of the Lord carrying Elijah away to some unknown spot. A like expression is found in the introduction to Ezekiel's vision (xxxvii. 1) of the dry bones. 'The hand of the Lord was upon me and carried me out in the spirit of the Lord.' The 'sons of the prophets' appear to have thought that the body of Elijah might be discovered somewhere, though God had taken away his soul. They had knowledge, as is seen from the previous part of the narrative, that the prophet was to be taken away from life, but seem to have expected his body would be left lifeless near the spot where he was separated from Elisha. It cannot be supposed after what they had before said to Elisha, that the Lord would take away his master from him on that day, that they expected to find Elijah somewhere alive. 'Could they think that God would send such a chariot and horses, for a less voyage than heaven?' (Bp Hall).

and cast him] Here the LXX. adds 'in the Jordan or', an addition which seems due to a desire to express every possible place into which the body could have been thrown. If it were not on a hill or in a valley, it might perhaps be in the river. The use of the word 'cast' seems to indicate that they thought of the body of the prophet as merely the wrapping of that better part which God had taken to Himself, and that the body was of small account when the spirit had been taken from it.

Ye shall not send] There could be no doubt in Elisha's mind about the taking up of the body of his master. The garment left as a symbol of the granted petition was all that had fallen to the ground. But though he described, as no doubt he did, the glory which he had beheld and the way in which his master was translated, the sons of the prophets could not be moved from their notion that the body of Elijah might somewhere be discovered, and it is easy to understand how they would desire to give it reverent burial, if it were to be found.

17. *till* he *was ashamed*] i.e. to refuse longer so urgent, though as he knew resultless, a petition. There is no pronoun expressed in the original. Hence some have thought the expression meant 'to a shameful extent' and was to be applied to the undue persistence of the petitioners. But the same phrase occurs in Judges iii. 25 of Eglon's servants who waited till they were ashamed to wait longer. Here it implies that Elisha was at a loss how to refuse them any longer. His narrative was unprecedented in its character, and if they refused to be persuaded by that, he had no more that he could do.

when they came again to him, (for he tarried at Jericho,) he said unto them, Did I not say unto you, Go not?

18. *And when* [R.V. omits **when**] *they came again* [R.V. **back**] *to him*, (*for* [R. V. **while**] *he tarried at Jericho*)] The alteration of the R. V. of course removes the parenthesis. The Hebrew has in both places only the conjunction usually rendered 'And'. The two clauses are literally 'And they came back and he was tarrying' &c. Having acceded to their request, he waited for the return of the searching party. 'They turn back as wise as they went. Some men are best satisfied when they have wearied themselves in their own ways. Nothing will teach them wit but disappointments' (Bp Hall).

We cannot dismiss the history of Elijah, which is brought to a close in this chapter, without some notice of the powerful hold which that history took upon the minds of the Jewish people, and of the prominent place which the prophet fills in the writings of the New Testament. In the Old Testament Elijah is rarely mentioned except in these chapters of the books of Kings, yet from the way in which Malachi (iv. 5, 6) foretells his coming again we can see that the character of his mission had been fully appreciated. It was felt to be a mission suited for evil times, for times when God might be expected to come and smite the earth with a curse, if men repented not. Elijah is therefore set forth as mighty rather in works than in words. His was hardly the day for preaching. He is also, nearly always, seen to be supported by the loftiest faith, and his message is on that account attested by signs more striking than usual. On the contrary among his countrymen the decay of faith was so complete, that no work of mercy was wrought by this prophet except for a stranger, the widow of Zarephath.

The son of Sirach (Ecclus. xlviii. 1—12) speaks of Elijah as a fire, no unfit comparison, and of his word as a lamp. He calls him a prophet ordained for the reproof of the times in which he lived, and to pacify the wrath of the Lord's judgement before it brake forth into fury. The day of the Lord was at hand, and his warnings were sent by a startling messenger. And although the wrath of the Almighty was not ultimately diverted from Israel, we can see how the mighty works of Elijah stirred up a more devout spirit in the land, and thus put back the day of vengeance. This influence of Elijah's life is specially to be noted in the days of his successor. We come constantly upon evidence that even in the house of Ahab itself the prophet of the Lord was held in some esteem, while Jehovah was truly worshipped by not a few in the land, though Baal and the calves had captivated the multitude.

Hence in later days, to the mind of the pious Jew, Elijah was deemed to be ever interested in the spiritual welfare of the Lord's people, and a place was set for him at every circumcision-service. We can see too how his ministry for help was in all men's minds from the mistake which was made at the Crucifixion, when our Lord's cry of agony was interpreted into a call for Elijah. That his intervention was ever expected to be salutary is testified by the language 'Let us see whether Elijah will come and save him'. The large place which Elijah filled

19 And the men of the city said unto Elisha, Behold, I pray

in the thoughts of the Jews of our Lord's day is shewn by the mention in the New Testament of his name and his work more frequently than those of any other prophet; while both in his despondency over the evil condition of the nation (Rom. xi. 2) and in the mention of his effectual prayer (James v. 17) he is identified most closely with the people whom he so earnestly served as 'a man subject to like passions as we are'.

For such a prophet men were looking in those evil days which preceded the coming of Christ, and from a like obscurity in the desert John the Baptist suddenly emerged in the spirit and power of Elijah (Luke i. 17) and all men recognised him as God's prophet. 'Art thou Elijah?' was the first question of those who saw and heard him (John i. 21) and Jesus pointed out to His disciples that the office of Elijah was truly fulfilled by the Baptist (Matth. xi. 14).

The 'taking up' of Elijah was accepted by the Jews as a testimony to the doctrine of man's immortality. 'Blessed are they that saw thee' ...says the writer of Ecclesiasticus...'for we shall surely live.' Hence the great fitness of the appearance of Elijah with Moses at our Lord's Transfiguration. Christ came and brought life and incorruption to light, the former by the fulfilling of the Mosaic law, the latter by taking again His body after it had lain three days dead in the grave. The discourse on the mount of Transfiguration was of the decease which He was shortly to accomplish at Jerusalem. The presence of the prophet who had long before been taken from this world by the chariots of heaven calmed the minds of the disciples concerning the coming decease, taught them that to disappear from among men was not to perish, and so prepared them in a measure to believe the Master's promise 'In three days the Son of Man shall rise again'. Hence at a later time they could return in joy to Jerusalem when the angel had announced that this same Jesus whom they had seen taken up, should come again in like manner as they had seen Him depart. They had seen Elijah and by that they were assured that Jesus would be sent again. Thus they became preachers of the times of refreshing when God should send Jesus, the Christ, to bless men, as Elijah in his day fain would have done, by turning them away from their iniquities.

19—22. ELISHA HEALS THE NOXIOUS WATER AT JERICHO. (Not in Chronicles.)

19. *And the men of the city*] These are the ordinary inhabitants. From the sons of the prophets they would gather that Elisha was now gifted with the spirit and power of Elijah. The situation of Jericho, near the passage of the Jordan, was such as to attract a considerable population after it was rebuilt, and for the sake of the prosperity which came to them in other ways they were content to dwell in such an unwholesome place. Now however they saw a hope of benefit and with this thought they came to Elisha. 'It is good making use of a prophet while we have him' (Bp Hall).

I [R. V. **we**] *pray thee*] The Hebrew is a mere interjection. The change in the English is justified because the petitioners were numerous.

thee, the situation of *this* city *is* pleasant, as my lord seeth: but the water *is* naught, and the ground barren. And he 20
said, Bring me a new cruse, and put salt therein. And they brought *it* to him. And he went forth unto the spring 21
of the waters, and cast the salt in there, and said, Thus saith the LORD, I have healed these waters; there shall not be from thence any more death or barren *land*. So the 22
waters were healed unto this day, according to the saying of Elisha which he spake.

the situation of this *city* is *pleasant*] Jericho was a part of that country which, in Gen. xiii. 10, is compared to 'the garden of the Lord'.

the water is *naught*] This word is of frequent occurrence in the English of the 16th century in the sense of 'bad'. So too 'naughty'. Cf. Jer. xxiv. 2, 'naughty figs'. And for 'naught' cf. Shakes. *As You Like It*, I. 2. 68, 'The mustard was *naught*'. *Much Ado*, v. 1. 157, 'If I do not carve most curiously, say my knife's *naught*'.

and the ground barren] R.V. **and the land miscarrieth.** The R.V. is explained in a margin 'casteth her fruit'. The evil effect was clearly in consequence of the hurtful water, for the healing of the spring is to bring a remedy for the other evils. It seems therefore that the water was such as caused the trees to shed their fruit prematurely and the cattle which fed on the herbage which it watered to cast their young untimely, and it may be that the mischief extended also to the human beings who drank thereof.

20. *Bring me a new cruse, and put salt therein*] The purity and freshness of the vessel were to typify the purification wrought upon the spring. Salt too is significant of preservation and purity. We are not however to think of this as the means whereby the healing was wrought, but only as an outward sign to point to the work which was supernaturally performed. The old word 'cruse'=a cup, is akin to the more modern 'cruet' and 'crucible', and occurs before in the A.V. (1 Kings xiv. 3).

21. *Thus saith the Lord, I have healed these waters*] The prophet by his words carries the thought away from the sign to the thing signified, the power of God exerted at the prayer of the prophet. We cannot suppose, though no mention is made of it, that the healing was attempted without a calling upon God.

any more death or barren land] R.V. **or miscarrying.** The R.V. thus conforms to its rendering of verse 19, and gives a wider sense than that conveyed by the A.V. This is to be preferred because the root of the word applies in the first instance rather to deprivation of children than to sterility of soil.

22. *unto this day*] A note of a faithful reproduction by the compiler of what was written in some earlier document. See note on 1 Kings ix. 21. There is but one spring in the neighbourhood of Jericho, called now *Ain es Sultan*, and this is probably the same which existed in Elisha's time. Its waters spread over the plain of Jericho.

23 And he went up from thence *unto* Beth-el: and as he was
going up by the way, there came forth little children out of
the city, and mocked him, and said unto him, Go up, thou
24 bald head; go up, thou bald head. And he turned back,
and looked on them, and cursed them in the name of the

23—25. ELISHA CURSETH THE MOCKING CHILDREN AND SOME OF THEM ARE DESTROYED. (Not in Chronicles.)

23. *from thence* unto *Beth-el*] Going back by the same way which he had come some days before with Elijah.

there came forth little children] The margin of R. V. gives 'young lads'. The word in the original is that which Solomon uses in his prayer at Gibeon (1 Kings iii. 7), 'I am but *a little child*'. This was at the time when he had just been elevated to the throne. So that although the word may mean 'a little child' it is not necessary nor possible in the present passage to understand by it anything but such young persons as were well aware of the outrage and wickedness of their conduct.

Go up, thou bald head] As the prophet drew near to the city these youths recognised him by his garb for one of the Lord's prophets. It may be that he was wearing Elijah's mantle. Such a man would be thought fit sport for the children of the Baal-worshippers of Bethel, and they were most probably set on and encouraged in their mockery by their parents. Their home education and all the associations of the place would have given them a contempt for the true servants of God. The fault of what they did lay as much in their surroundings as in themselves. It would seem that Elisha was prematurely bald, for he lived a long time after Elijah's assumption, and this physical defect the insolent youths seized upon at once as a ground for ridicule. Elijah, the hairy man, had probably long shaggy locks, and so the contrast between the two would be marked at once.

24. *And he turned back, and looked on them*] R. V. **And he looked behind him and saw them.** The young lads had come forth from the city, and Elisha had, as it seems, passed by them, before they began their mockery. The word translated 'turned' in A. V. is used specially of turning the face toward any object. It is so rendered by A. V. in Gen. xviii. 22, 'And the men *turned their faces*'. Elisha turned about and saw in them the malice and evil spirit of their parents and kindred.

and cursed them in the name of the Lord] It was not to avenge himself. Their insult to him was but a symptom of their hatred of all that was connected with the pure worship of Jehovah. It was as Jehovah's servant and in vindication of Jehovah's honour that Elisha invoked a curse upon the revilers. 'God and His seer looked through these children at the parents, at all Israel. He would punish the parents' misnurturing their children, with the death of those children which they had mistaught' (Bp Hall).

LORD. And there came forth two she bears out of the wood, and tare forty and two children of them. And he 25
went from thence to mount Carmel, and from thence he returned *to* Samaria.

Now Jehoram the son of Ahab *began* to reign over Israel 3
in Samaria the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and reigned twelve years. And he wrought evil in 2
the sight of the LORD; but not like his father, and like his mother: for he put away the image of Baal that his father

two she bears] Of the prevalence of wild beasts in the immediate neighbourhood of cities we have indications in the history of David who slew a lion and a bear as he was keeping his father's flock (1 Sam. xvii. 36), and in the story of the disobedient prophet who was torn by a lion near this very city of Bethel (1 Kings xiii. 24).

tare forty and two] The punishment would touch the parents in a way which nothing else could have done.

25. *he went from thence to mount Carmel*] At which place, either for the purposes of devotion or because there also was a college of the prophets, we see from 2 Kings iv. 25, that Elisha was known to reside from time to time. The Shunammite mother in her distress knows where the prophet is to be found.

and from thence he returned to *Samaria*] In which city we learn, from the story of Naaman in chapter v. below, that Elisha had a house. The Israelitish maid also speaks of him there as 'the prophet that is in Samaria'. His most permanent home therefore was most likely in the royal city, and his visits to Carmel and other places made from time to time, as need required.

CH. III. **1—20.** JEHORAM KING OF ISRAEL AND JEHOSHAPHAT KING OF JUDAH MARCH AGAINST MOAB. IN THE DESERT THEY OBTAIN WATER THROUGH ELISHA, WHO ALSO PROMISES THEM VICTORY. (Not in Chronicles.)

1. *the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat*] How this year may be identified with 'the second year of Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat', which in 2 Kings i. 17 is the date assigned to Jehoram's accession, is not clear. But see above on that passage.

2. *And he wrought evil*] R.V. **And he did that which was evil.** The change made frequently that the same Hebrew phrase may be regularly rendered by the same English.

but not like his father, and like his mother] Jehoram was not so far gone in evil as his brother Ahaziah had been. He kept indeed to the calf-worship of Jeroboam, but put down the Baal-worship which had been introduced by Jezebel from Phœnicia. The writer makes a difference, as might be expected, between the sin of Jeroboam, grievous though that was, and the grosser idolatry which had been practised in the two last reigns.

he put away the image [R.V. **pillar**] *of Baal*] The Hebrew word

3 had made. Nevertheless he cleaved unto the sins of Jeroboam
the son of Nebat, which made Israel to sin; he departed not
4 therefrom. And Mesha king of Moab was a sheepmaster,
and rendered unto the king of Israel an hundred thousand

[*maṣṣebah*] is first used of the stone (Gen. xxviii. 18) which Jacob set up for a pillar at Bethel, and it seems likely, as it is used here and elsewhere in the accounts of Baal-worship, that these objects of worship were not figures, but of the nature of obelisks. They were probably for the most part of stone, though those mentioned as brought out of the house of Baal (2 Kings x. 26) and burned must have been of wood. Perhaps those under cover were made of wood, and overlaid with precious metals (cf. Hos. ii. 8), while those out of doors were of stone.

that his father had made] This was no doubt some special pillar which the king had erected near his palace for his own and Jezebel's worship. This open token of devotion to the idols of the nations Jehoram put away. But there remained pillars of Baal and a house of Baal still for Jehu to destroy. Jehoram found it difficult to go far in a reformation among persons given up as his subjects were to idolatry, and all the more difficult because his own father had been the founder and fosterer of the evil.

3. *he cleaved unto the sins of Jeroboam*] The calf-worship was the token of Israel's separation from Judah, and had a political significance. Other kings beside Jeroboam would feel the danger of allowing the northern people to return to the temple at Jerusalem to worship. So a king who might be disposed for religious reforms would shrink from including the suppression of the calves in his programme.

which made [R.V. **wherewith he made**] *Israel to sin*] The A.V. is inconsistent, sometimes making the relative, in this oft-recurring phrase, refer to Jeroboam, sometimes to the sin. It is clear from 1 Kings xv. 26, that there, where it is first found, it must refer to the sin, and so A.V. there translates 'wherewith he made'. The other places have been made uniform in rendering in R.V.

4. *And Mesha king of Moab*] This name for the king of Moab occurs in the first line of the Moabite stone. In that inscription the Moabite king mentions his successes against Omri and Omri's successor and speaks of forty years as the time during which the conflict between Israel and Moab continued. Now Omri reigned six years (1 Kings xvi. 23) and Ahab's reign lasted twenty-two years (1 Kings xvi. 29) while Ahaziah reigned one or two years more. Thus the whole period of forty years would not be covered unless we take in the reign of Jehoram. The Moabite inscription naturally represents only the Moabite successes, but the Scripture narrative shews that the victory over Omri had been followed by a defeat in the days of Ahab.

a sheepmaster] The LXX. transliterates the word writing Νωκήδ. It occurs only here and in Amos i. 1. The other Greek versions and the Targum give the meaning. The Moabite country by its character, valleys with fertile hill-sides and streams of water running through

lambs, and an hundred thousand rams, *with* the wool. But 5
it came to pass, when Ahab was dead, that the king of Moab
rebelled against the king of Israel. And king Jehoram went 6
out of Samaria the same time, and numbered all Israel.

them, was eminently suited for a pastoral people; and from the nature of the tribute imposed it seems likely that all the wealth of the Moabites was in their cattle.

rendered unto the king of Israel] At the division of the kingdoms, Moab would fall to the share of the ten tribes, as it joined on to the south of the tribe of Reuben. Perhaps the tribute at first had not been so heavy as is here described, but had been increased on account of the struggles of Moab to throw off their yoke.

an hundred thousand lambs, and an hundred thousand rams, with *the wool*] R.V. **the wool of** *an hundred thousand lambs, and of an hundred thousand rams.* There is nothing in the Hebrew for 'with'. The construction is: 'he rendered these animals, the wool'. So that it seems best to take the last word as explanatory of what has preceded, and to understand that what the Moabite king gave of these numerous animals was the fleece only. The LXX. understood it so, and gives *ἐπὶ πόκων*, as we might say *fleece-wise*. That version however adds in the verse, without any warrant of the original, *ἐν τῇ ἐπαναστάσει=in the revolt*, as if to explain that this large payment had been made only on one occasion. But this is wholly without evidence, and the Hebrew would lead us to think that the payment was made every year, and this is implied in Is. xvi. 1, 'Send ye the lamb', i.e. the tribute of lambs. This being so, it is more likely that the fleeces were sent than the live stock. Indeed there would be little meaning in adding 'the wool' if the flocks were to be sent alive. It should be mentioned however that Josephus supports the A.V. saying *μυριάδας εἴκοσι προβάτων σὺν τοῖς πόκοις*.

5. *when Ahab was dead*] The sickness of Ahaziah had no doubt prevented him from taking any step during his brief reign to suppress the revolt of Moab. It is probable that during Ahaziah's time all those reconquests, that are mentioned in the Mesha tablet, were made by the Moabites, the king of Israel being able to offer no resistance.

6. *went out of Samaria the same time*] R.V. **at that time.** The time indicated is probably the occasion of the first refusal of the tribute to Jehoram. He might perhaps regard the former refusal, which no doubt had been given to Ahaziah, as prompted by the knowledge that the king of Israel was weak and unfit for war, and so there was a good opportunity to strive for freedom. Hence he would wait till the season came round, and prepare his campaign when he found that he was to be treated with the same measure as his brother.

and numbered] R.V. **mustered.** The verb implies a good deal more than the mere numbering. It includes all the inspection necessary to find whether an army is ready for war. Hence the king gathered the troops outside Samaria. The word 'muster' is the rendering of one form of this verb in A.V. (Is. xiii. 4) but in most other passages 'number'

7 And he went and sent to Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, saying, The king of Moab hath rebelled against me: wilt thou go with me against Moab to battle? And he said, I will go up: I *am* as thou *art*, my people as thy people, *and* 8 my horses as thy horses. And he said, Which way shall we go up? And he answered, The way through the wilderness 9 of Edom. So the king of Israel went, and the king of Judah, and the king of Edom: and they fetcht a compass

is used for it. What Jehoram did was to gather together all the men of war from the ten tribes to a camp near Samaria and when all was arranged to start on his march.

7. *And he went and sent*] This Hebrew verb 'to go' is not unfrequently placed before another finite verb, without any special sense of moving from a place, but merely to express the idea of 'setting about' the act indicated by the following verb. Thus Exod. ii. 1, 'There *went a man*...and took to wife a daughter of Levi'. Cf. also Deut. xxxi. 1, 'Moses *went and spake*'.

to Jehoshaphat] The close family alliance existing at the time between the royal families of Israel and Judah made this a not unnatural request. Cf. Ahab's message to king Jehoshaphat (1 Kings xxii. 4). Jehoshaphat gives to Jehoram almost the same reply which he had given on the previous occasion to his father.

I will go up] The hill country of Moab was considerably more elevated than the lands on the west of the Jordan; not so mountainous as Gilead, but sufficient to justify the expression of Jehoshaphat, though Jehoram had not used the word.

8. *And he said, Which way shall we go up?*] These are the words of Jehoram, who leaves to his ally, the elder monarch, the decision of the line of march. They might have crossed the Jordan to the north of the Dead Sea and so come upon Moab from the north, but they would have had more difficulty then in bringing the king of Edom and his army along with them. The LXX. has 'Which way shall *I* go up?'

through the wilderness of Edom] It would seem from 1 Kings xxii. 47 (see note there) that the Edomite royal family had come to an end, and that Jehoshaphat claimed the rights over that land which had been held in former times by Solomon. Hence the 'deputy' spoken of in that passage as 'king of Edom' would be one set up and maintained on his throne by the king of Judah. We can see from this how the way through Edom would be easy and would commend itself to Jehoshaphat.

9. *So the king of Israel went*] Josephus (*Ant.* IX. 3. 1) tells how Jehoram and his army were hospitably and magnificently received in Jerusalem before they started on their march.

and the king of Edom] The same author says that along with his own promise of help, Jehoshaphat had pledged himself to compel the king of Edom, his subject, to take part in the expedition. So by going this way the army not only found an uninterrupted line of march but additional forces also.

of seven days' journey; and there was no water for the host, and for the cattle that followed them. And the king of 10
Israel said, Alas, that the LORD hath called these three kings *together*, to deliver them into the hand of Moab. But 11
Jehoshaphat said, *Is there* not here a prophet of the LORD, that we may inquire of the LORD by him? And one of the king of Israel's servants answered and said, Here *is* Elisha the son of Shaphat, which poured water on the hands of Elijah. And Jehoshaphat said, The word of the LORD is 12
with him. So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat and the

and they fetcht a compass [R.V. **made a circuit**] *of seven days' journey*] This old English phrase for taking a roundabout road is found here and 2 Sam. v. 23; Acts xxviii. 13. It is not easy to see why they should have gone so long a way about, when the country through which they were passing belonged to one of the allied kings. It might perhaps be necessary for the sake of finding provender. Josephus says that their guides led them wrong, but this is highly improbable. There must have been many persons among the Edomites who were familiar enough with all the ways into the neighbouring country of Moab.

and for the cattle] R.V. **beasts.** This change is made that there may be uniformity of rendering between this verse and verse 17.

10. *Alas, that* [R.V. **for**] *the Lord hath called*] Thus R.V. conforms to the rendering of A.V. in verse 13. The lamentation is caused by what Jehoram thinks will be their fate. And the conjunction, which can be rendered 'for' or 'that' seems to be here used to express the ground for the lament. Josephus makes Jehoram cry unto God, asking of what evil they had been guilty that He had brought them thither to give them up without a battle into the hand of Moab.

11. *Jehoshaphat said*, Is there *not here a prophet of the Lord*] He made the same enquiry before the march to Ramoth-Gilead (1 Kings xxii. 7). The prophets who would be in attendance on Jehoram would be those connected with the worship of the calves. It is however interesting to note that Jehoram ascribes to the Lord Jehovah the calling together of the armies for this expedition. We see from this how the calf-worship was not felt to be in direct opposition to the true worship. The presence of Elisha with the host shews also that there was something which a prophet of the Lord found to warrant his presence with the army. The promptness too with which he is mentioned indicates that he was well known and honoured by some who were about the king's person.

Elisha the son of Shaphat, which poured water on the hands of Elijah] The sort of service here indicated marks one who had been in constant attendance on his master, who therefore understood his feelings, and had thus grown to understand on what occasions Jehovah might be appealed to. Hence the confidence of Jehoshaphat, 'The word of the Lord is with him'.

12. *is with him*] This expression seems to imply a more than

13 king of Edom went down to him. And Elisha said unto
the king of Israel, What have I to do with thee? get thee
to the prophets of thy father, and to the prophets of
thy mother. And the king of Israel said unto him, Nay:
for the LORD hath called these three kings *together*, to deli-
14 ver them into the hand of Moab. And Elisha said, *As* the
LORD of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, surely, were
it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat the king of

ordinary participation of the divine Spirit. The more usual phrase is 'The word of the Lord came to' (cf. Gen. xv. 1; 1 Sam. xv. 10 &c.). And even the 'sons of the prophets' recognized that Elijah and after him Elisha were preeminently endowed with gifts from God.

went down to him] Such a man was not to be lightly summoned, and at such a crisis all reverence would be shewn to one on whose words it seemed that the chance of relief greatly depended. It may be that the phrase 'go down' is used here also because the tents of the kings would stand above the host. Josephus tells us that the tent of Elisha was outside the camp, which is very improbable. Bp Hall remarks here: 'It was news, to see three kings going down to the servant of him who ran before the chariot of Ahab. Religion and necessity have both of them much power of humiliation. I know not whether more. Either zeal or need will make a prophet honoured'.

13. *What have I to do with thee?*] An expression equivalent to a command to be gone. Cf. Mark v. 7; Luke viii. 28; John ii. 4.

the prophets of thy father] It would be no easy task, however willing Jehoram might be, to put down at once the worship of Baal. We know indeed that this was not done. Only the special outward mark, 'the pillar of Baal' (verse 2), which indicated the royal attachment to the idolatrous rites, and stood perhaps in the king's own ground, was put down. Jehoram would be forced to trust to the power of opinion to banish the worship completely. It is so much more easy to encourage wrong than to get rid of it. Hence to Elisha the acts of Jehoram would seem very fainthearted, and he would be held for a sharer in the ways of Ahab and Jezebel.

Nay] i. e. Send me not away thus. And in his next sentence he admits that the orderer of all these events is Jehovah, and confesses by implication that to Him only can they look for aid.

14. As *the Lord of hosts liveth*] Probably the use of this expression is due to the circumstances. Jehovah, set before the Jews as the Lord of the armies both of heaven and of earth, would be fitly spoken of by this title at this time. There were three armies together all reduced to the greatest straits, and brought to sue for help to the prophet of the Lord. It was a fit opportunity for pointing out that though armies may be gathered, yet the issue of their undertaking is in His hands alone. He is the living God, all others are no gods.

were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat] Thus the prophet continues the same thought. Jehovah, the Lord of hosts, is

Judah, I would not look toward thee, nor see thee. But 15
now bring me a minstrel. And it came to pass, when the
minstrel played, that the hand of the LORD came upon him.
And he said, Thus saith the LORD, Make this valley full of 16
ditches. For thus saith the LORD, Ye shall not see wind, 17

specially the protector of His people. When they are in danger, and cry to Him, He heareth them. And the prophet is the representative of God. Jehoshaphat joins in the appeal, and for his sake mercy is extended to the less deserving also.

I would not look toward thee, nor see thee] There is no sense employed with less labour to the possessor than that of sight. Hence the expression here used implies that Elisha would not have made the faintest effort for Jehoram's sake alone.

15. *But now bring me a minstrel*] Of the power of music over the mind we have examples in the history of Saul (1 Sam. xvi. 23) and also of the use of music by the companies of prophets (1 Sam. x. 5). But neither of these instances illustrates the case of Elisha as here described. It was not employed to calm his own angry spirit, and he was alone, whereas the prophetic band in 1 Sam. x. 5 were marching in a body, and chanting some religious hymns or service. From the result described here, viz. that the hand (that is, the influence and spirit) of the Lord came upon him, we may conclude that this was what Elisha wished for, and we may suppose that while the music went on his thoughts took shape, and found vent in prayer, till at length he was prompted inwardly what to say. A striking instance of the power of music.

the hand of the Lord] The phrase is most frequently employed in the Pentateuch and the historical books to signify God's power exerted in punishment. Cf. Exod. ix. 3, 'The hand of the Lord is upon thy cattle'. See also Deut. ii. 15; Josh. xxii. 31; Judges ii. 15. But it is also used of the divine power which strengthened and supported Elijah, 1 Kings xviii. 46, and several times in Ezekiel of the spirit by which the prophet was possessed (cf. Ezek. i. 3; iii. 14, 22; viii. 1; xxxiii. 22; xxxvii. 1). The passage Ezek. xxxiii. 22 may be best quoted in illustration of the case of Elisha: 'The hand of the Lord was upon me in the evening... and had opened my mouth...and my mouth was opened and I was no more dumb.' As to Ezekiel, so here to Elisha there was given what he should speak. Josephus says 'he became inspired'.

16. *Make this valley full of ditches*] R.V. **trenches**. The valley was a torrent bed which in the time of rain would become suddenly flooded with the water from the steep sides, and from the watershed above. This would soon run away, and the excavations mentioned here seem to have been meant to dam up the water, and prevent its rapid escape, that so the army might be supplied for a good while if necessary.

17. *For thus saith the Lord*] Both the order to dig trenches, and the promise of water are prefaced in this solemn manner. It is no order of his own which the prophet delivers.

Ye shall not see wind] The verb 'see' is used elsewhere of what is

neither shall ye see rain; yet that valley shall be filled *with* water, that ye may drink, *both* ye, and your cattle, and your
18 beasts. And this is *but* a light thing in the sight of the LORD: he will deliver the Moabites also into your hand.
19 And ye shall smite every fenced city, and every choice city, and shall fell every good tree, and stop all wells of water,
20 and mar every good piece of land with stones. And it

not visible but experienced by the other senses. So Exod. xx. 18, 'All the people *saw* the thunderings...and the noise of the trumpet'. After a drought wind is in the East the general precursor of rain. Cf. 1 Kings xviii. 41, 45.

neither shall ye see rain] The prophet's language here implies that the cause of the coming supply of water would be rain falling elsewhere. Natural powers will bring the rain, though it shall fall at a distance from the camp, so that neither Moab nor the invading armies shall be aware of its falling.

that ye may [R. V. **and ye shall**] *drink*] Thus giving a strictly literal rendering.

your cattle] These were the animals brought with them to be killed as occasion required for food. The *beasts*, next mentioned, are the beasts of burden.

18. *And this is* but *a light thing*] For the expression cf. below ch. xx. 10. What God gives, He gives to the full. He will not only guide the forces of nature so that the bodily wants of the armies shall be supplied, but will crown their expedition with success.

19. *and shall fell every good tree*] Some persons have seen in Elisha's language here a contradiction to Deut. xx. 19, where in the siege of a city the Israelites are forbidden to cut down the fruit trees. But in that place the reference is to the trees of Canaan, where the people were themselves to settle and live. The land of Moab was not to be occupied by them, therefore they were bidden to destroy everything in it. In Deuteronomy it is expressly said, 'Thou shalt not destroy them, for thou mayest eat of them'.

stop all wells [R.V. **fountains**] *of water*] As water in the east is mostly reached by digging, what is here meant is that all such places should be filled up, so that the work of obtaining water might have all to be done over again. The R.V. gives 'fountains' in verse 25 also.

mar every good piece of land] The verb, when used elsewhere, signifies 'to give, or have, pain'. So Job v. 18, 'He maketh sore'. Ezek. xiii. 22, 'I have not made sad'. The LXX. translates here, 'ye shall render useless'. The expression is somewhat poetical, representing the land as mourning because it is rendered unfruitful. But a similar figure, though not the same word, is found Jer. xii. 4, 'How long shall the land mourn, and the herbs of every field wither?'

20. *when the meat offering was offered*] R.V. **about the time of of-**

came to pass in the morning, when the meat offering was offered, that behold, there came water by the way of Edom, and the country was filled with water.

And when all the Moabites heard that the kings were 21
come up to fight against them, they gathered all that *were able to* put on armour, and upward, and stood in the border.

fering the oblation. The term *meat offering* has become misleading to modern English readers, because it would now imply that flesh of some kind formed a part of the offering; whereas the oblation [*minchah*] here spoken of consisted (see Lev. ii. 1) of fine flour, oil and frankincense. Hence R.V. has rendered the word very frequently 'meal offering', and in some places as here, where there was no need to be specific, by 'oblation'. The time of the offering was as soon as possible after day-dawn. In a similar manner the time selected by Elijah (1 Kings xviii. 36) for offering his prayer to God on Carmel was at the time of the offering of the evening oblation. Thus in both cases God's intervention was linked to the worship at Jerusalem. 'Elijah fetched down his fire at the hour of the evening sacrifice, Elisha fetched up his water at the hour of the morning sacrifice. God gives respect to His own hours for the encouragement of our observation. If His wisdom hath set us any peculiar times, we cannot keep them without a blessing' (Bp Hall).

by the way of Edom] The fall of rain, to which the supply of water was due, would thus be unknown to the Moabites even more than to the Israelites. Josephus describes the rain as having fallen in abundance at a distance of three days' journey (*Ant.* IX. 3. 2).

21—27. THE MOABITES ATTACK THE ALLIED ARMIES, BUT ARE DEFEATED. THE KING OF MOAB SACRIFICES HIS ELDEST SON. (Not in Chronicles.)

21. *And* [R.V. **Now**] *when all the Moabites heard*] By the circuitous journey which the armies had made their march would be less observed, and it would only be at the time of their appearance on the frontier that the object of their expedition would become known. But the casting off the yoke of Israel, and the freeing of their land from such a burdensome tribute made the war popular in Moab, and all were prepared to do their duty against the invaders.

come up] See above on verse 7.

they gathered all that were able to *put on armour*] R.V. **they gathered themselves together, all** &c. The verb is literally, 'they called themselves together'. The expression indicates the enthusiasm with which each man appealed to his neighbour. 'To put on armour' is literally 'to gird themselves with a girdle', for to the girdle the weapon was attached.

and stood in the border] This would naturally be a height dividing their country from the land of Edom.

22 And they rose up early in the morning, and the sun shone upon the water, and the Moabites saw the water on the
23 other side *as* red as blood: and they said, This *is* blood: the kings are surely slain, and they have smitten one
24 another: now therefore, Moab, to the spoil. And when they came to the camp of Israel, the Israelites rose up and smote the Moabites, so that they fled before them: but they went forward smiting the Moabites, even in their country.
25 And they beat down the cities, and *on* every good piece of

22. *they rose up early in the morning*] When the rays of the sun would be shining obliquely on the water, and would cause it to have an unusual colour.

the water on the other side] R.V. **over against them.** See above on ii. 7.

as *red as blood*] This would be partly due to the slanting rays of the sun, and partly perhaps to the redness of the land through which the water had flowed. It was impossible for the Moabites to think what they saw to be water, for no signs of rain had been observable.

23. *the kings are surely slain* [R.V. **destroyed**], *and they have smitten one another*] R.V. **each man his fellow.** The Moabites knew of the contests which had been between Israel and Judah in times past, and might readily fancy that the peace which had been made between Ahab and Jehoshaphat had now been broken through some difference during the expedition. They would also know that the Edomite vassal of Judah was likely to seize the first opportunity to strike a blow for independence. Their own wish too was no doubt father to the thought. Hence their impetuous rush down upon the enemy.

24. *the Israelites rose up and smote the Moabites*] The hasty and irregular manner in which the Moabites rushed forward, with no thought but of an easy booty, gave the Israelites an opportunity which otherwise they would not have had. Before their assailants could gather themselves for resistance they were able to put them to a confused flight. And the discovery of their mistake would paralyse the Moabites and make victory certain for Israel and their allies.

but they went forward smiting the Moabites, even in their country] R.V. **they went forward into the land smiting the Moabites.** The Hebrew text presents some difficulty here. The word which R.V. has represented by 'into the land' is literally 'into it'. But as Moab (translated Moabites) has been mentioned in the previous clause the pronoun may fairly be referred to it. The verb 'they went forward' is not of the usual form and for יָבוֹ = יָבְאוּ the marginal reading of the Massoretic text suggests יַכּוּ = they smote, and this the margin of A.V. translates, 'and they smote in it, even smiting'. But the suggestion seems unnecessary. The LXX. read יָבוֹ for they give *εἰσῆλθον εἰσπορευόμενοι*, apparently having taken the preposition and pronoun בָּהּ for the verb בּוֹא.

land cast every man his stone, and filled it; and they stopped all the wells of water, and felled all the good trees: only in Kirharaseth left *they* the stones thereof; howbeit the slingers went about *it*, and smote it. And when the 26
king of Moab saw that the battle was too sore for him, he took with him seven hundred men that drew swords, to break through *even* unto the king of Edom: but they could not. Then he took his eldest son that should have reigned 27

25. *cast every man his stone*] Thus ensuring that the ground should be made, for a long time to come, useless for the pasturage of flocks.

only in Kirharaseth left they *the stones thereof*] R.V. **until in Kir-hareseth** only **they left the stones thereof.** It will be seen from the margin of A.V. that the R.V. approaches more nearly to the literal sense of the Hebrew. What is meant to be expressed is that the only town of which the stone walls were allowed to remain was this capital city of Moab. Probably it was the only city with any solidity of walls. A pastoral people, such as the Moabites were, have very little need for fenced towns. Kirhareseth (for so the name is pointed) is the same which in Isaiah xv. 1 is called Kir of Moab, and in Jer. xlviii. 31, 36 Kir-heres. As Kir signifies 'wall' or 'fortress', there appears much probability that this was the only very great stronghold in the land, though Ar of Moab is mentioned as a fortified town (Num. xxi. 28; Is. xv. 1). The other village-like settlements were easily dismantled, and their stones served to strew and ruin the pastures. All that was attempted on the stronger place was to clear its walls of their defenders by means of slingers.

26. *he took with him seven hundred men that drew swords*] R.V. **sword.** In this phrase the singular is of the more frequent occurrence in A.V. The Moabite king desired to cut his way through the besiegers and so to escape, and he made the attempt in the direction of the king of Edom's troops, either because that was the weaker side of the allied host, or else because he thought he might be received by the Edomite king, and that they together might turn against the combined forces of Israel and Judah. Josephus suggests the former reason, saying he made his sally where the guard was relaxed. The expression 'break through *unto* the king of Edom' seems to hint that he thought to find there an ally.

27. *his eldest son*] i.e. his own eldest son, not as has been explained by some, the eldest son of the Edomite king. His thought was to offer such a sacrifice as would be most acceptable. Hence he gave what was most precious to him. And the offering was made to his own god, Chemosh (see Numb. xxi. 29). Among the heathen human sacrifice was not uncommon, and some have thought that from the sight of such offerings Abraham was brought to contemplate the sacrifice of Isaac as required of him to prove that he was not less devoted to Jehovah's service than the heathen people to their idolatry.

in his stead, and offered him *for* a burnt offering upon the wall. And there was great indignation against Israel: and they departed from him, and returned to *their own* land.

4 Now there cried a certain woman of the wives of the

upon the wall] This was no doubt done to shew to the Israelites that every means had been taken by him to secure the aid of the local divinity against his assailants. Such a sacrifice they might think could hardly fail of obtaining the help sought by it.

And there was great indignation [R.V. **wrath**] *against Israel*] The word rendered 'wrath' or 'indignation' is nearly always used of the wrath of God against offenders. But it appears difficult to take it in that sense here. God's promise through Elisha was that Israel should conquer, and they were bidden to smite every fenced city and every choice city. Therefore unless we conceive that underlying God's message there was conceived some point beyond which they were not to go, and that the forcing of the king to offer his son was of this character, it is hard to see how they could be held to blame and worthy of God's wrath. They were in no position to know what the king intended, nor, when they saw him on the wall, to prevent his sacrifice. It seems better therefore to take 'wrath' in this place to signify 'wrath of men'. The word is found in Eccl. v. 17, 'All his days he eateth in darkness, and is sore vexed and hath sickness and *wrath*' (R.V.). This can be either of what the man feels himself, or of what others feel towards him. Taking the latter sense, the meaning here would be that in the minds of the men of Judah and Edom there rose indignation that they had been brought to partake in an expedition which led to such a dreadful sacrifice. If we apply the word to the feelings of the Israelites themselves, we get the sense that they were grieved and angry at so terrible a result, and so hastened to leave the dreadful scene. The margin of R.V., 'There came great wrath upon Israel', alludes to the anger of God, but it seems, as the preposition is 'against', to be better to understand that the allies were grieved at having shared in so disastrous a warfare. Josephus says the kings pitied the need which the Moabite monarch had felt when he offered up his child, and so withdrew.

and they departed from him] i.e. from the king of Moab. This seems to shew that it was the horrible act of the king which made them ready to be gone at once. It was not the land which they left. Had no such sacrifice as is here described taken place they would have prosecuted the siege according to the prophet's word. But now they withdrew in horror.

Ch. IV. 1—7. The miracles of Elisha. The increase of the widow's oil. (Not in Chronicles.)

1. *a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets*] It appears from this that the members of the colleges of prophets did not withdraw themselves from common domestic life altogether. It may be that

sons of the prophets unto Elisha, saying, Thy servant my husband is dead; and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the LORD: and the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondmen. And Elisha said unto her, 2 What shall I do for thee? tell me, what hast thou in the house? And she said, Thine handmaid hath not any thing in the house, save a pot of oil. Then he said, Go, borrow 3 thee vessels abroad of all thy neighbours, *even* empty vessels; borrow not a few. And when thou art come in, 4 thou shalt shut the door upon thee and upon thy sons, and

from time to time, during seasons of devotion, they joined the companies at Bethel, Gilgal or elsewhere, and then returned to their home duties. The man here spoken of had engaged in some transaction for which money had been borrowed, and had died before it could be paid off.

unto Elisha] This appeal shews us that Elisha was regarded as the head of the whole prophetic band. Josephus (*Ant.* IX. 4, 2) says this woman was the widow of Obadiah, Ahab's steward, and that the borrowed money mentioned in the text had been expended on the support of the hundred prophets whom he hid and supported. There is nothing to connect the two narratives together except that Obadiah said of himself, 'I thy servant fear the Lord from my youth', and the widow, in this story, gives an almost identical character to her husband.

and the creditor is come] It was allowed by the Mosaic law (Lev. xxv. 39—41) that a debtor and his children (and so, if he were dead, as here, his children only) might be taken as bondservants by a creditor, and the debt cancelled by their labour. (Cf. Matth. xviii. 25.) It was however provided that they should go free in the year of jubilee.

sons] R.V. **children**. That they were sons we see from the course of the narrative, but the Hebrew word is not the same here as in verse 4. So R.V. has marked the difference.

2. *save a pot of oil*] The word rendered 'pot' is from a root meaning 'to anoint' and the LXX. has here 'save the oil with which I shall anoint myself'. The word may be noticed because it indicates the poverty of the widow. It was not the finest oil, such as would be used for cooking food, that she had, but the more common kind which every Oriental makes use of after a bath.

3. *borrow thee vessels*] Another sign of indigence. But the command to borrow many gave promise of the coming help.

4. *And when thou art come in, thou shalt shut the door*] R.V. more literally, **And thou shalt go in and shut**, &c. There was to be no display made in connexion with the miracle. For this cause as well as to avoid interruption, the door was shut. The language of the prophet puts the faith of the widow to the test, for it was hard to conceive that one vessel, much less a great number, could be filled from her anointing pot. But as the wife of a prophet, who had been a servant of the Lord,

shalt pour out into all those vessels, and thou shalt set aside
5 *that* which *is* full. So she went from him, and shut the door upon her and upon her sons, who brought *the vessels*
6 to her; and she poured out. And it came to pass, when the vessels were full, that she said unto her son, Bring me yet a vessel. And he said unto her, *There is* not a vessel
7 more. And the oil stayed. Then she came and told the man of God. And he said, Go, sell the oil, and pay thy debt, and live thou and thy children of the rest.

she had learnt whence help could be sought, when every other source had failed.

5. *who* [R.V. **they**] *brought* the vessels *to her*] The R.V. marks that the Hebrew here begins a new clause with a personal pronoun. The widow's unquestioning obedience, in which her sons also imitated her, has its reward.

6. *she said unto her son*] Here the LXX., apparently only because 'sons' had been mentioned before, has here also 'sons' and later on in the verse 'and they said'. The Hebrew is far more natural. Both sons had helped, but it would be to one that her request 'Bring me another' would be addressed.

And the oil stayed] i.e. ceased to flow any longer. The English verb is a little antiquated in this sense, being now more commonly used for 'to cause to stand'. But cf. Josh. x. 13 'The sun stood still and the moon *stayed*', i.e. ceased to move.

7. *she came and told the man of God*] Feeling that the disposal of the oil should be made according to the direction of him who had told her what to do. It would seem to her that the unexpected supply could not be regarded as her own property.

pay thy debt] Like several of Elisha's miracles, e.g. the curing the noxious water at Jericho (ii. 19—22), this multiplying of the widow's oil was wrought for the help of those connected with the colleges of prophets. And as we read the frequent mention of these bodies, in the histories both of Elijah and Elisha, we cannot but wonder at the righteous zeal which shewed itself in this way in the northern kingdom. Most of the places we read of as seats of prophetic schools were in the ten tribes, and nearly all the work of the two great leaders was done among the northern people. It would seem therefore that in spite of the prevalence of the calf-worship there must have been a special manifestation of true religious feeling, just at the worst time of Israel's history.

live thou and thy children [R.V. **sons**] *of the rest*] Not, that is, on the remaining oil, though the LXX. gives ἐν τῷ ἐπιλοίπῳ ἐλαίῳ. The oil was all to be sold, and the money that was over, when the debt was paid, would be a means of support till the sons, now no longer forced to labour as slaves, might find a way to earn a living.

And it fell on a day, that Elisha passed to Shunem, where 8
was a great woman; and she constrained him to eat bread.
And *so* it was, *that* as oft as he passed by, he turned in
thither to eat bread. And she said unto her husband, 9
Behold now, I perceive that this *is* a holy man of God,

8—17. ELISHA PROMISES A SON TO THE HOSPITABLE SHUNAMMITE. (Not in Chronicles.)

8. *And it fell on a day*] Lit. *and the day was.* In the mind of the narrator the day is regarded as defined in relation to the events about to be narrated. Cp. below, verses 11 and 18.

Elisha passed to Shunem] In Joshua xix. 18, Shunem is among the places allotted to the tribe of Issachar. It is also mentioned as the place where the Philistines encamped before the battle of Gilboa (1 Sam. xxviii. 4). It has been identified with *Solam*, a village situate on the little Hermon about 3 miles north of Jezreel. When Elisha was travelling either from Samaria or Jezreel to Carmel, Shunem lay on his road. The place is mentioned as being the home of Abishag (1 Kings i. 3) and from that is derived the Jewish tradition which makes the Shunammite woman of the present narrative to have been the sister of Abishag.

a great woman] The adjective is used to signify *wealthy* in 1 Sam. xxv. 2, of Nabal, and 2 Sam. xix. 32 of Barzillai, who is described as 'a very great man'. As the Shunammite woman had a husband still alive, it would be more natural to speak of him as 'great' in the sense of 'rich', and perhaps here the meaning is rather 'influential'. She was clearly a person of independent character, and *one who* could act when the occasion demanded it.

she constrained him to eat bread] The journeys of Elisha to and fro had somehow become known to her and she offered him hospitality. This was the usual way in the East, where houses for public entertainment were uncommon.

as oft as he passed by] Apparently the allusion is to such rounds as the chief of the prophetic colleges would make to the different centres at which they were gathered. That Elisha's visits were frequent is clear from the next verse.

9. *she said unto her husband*] The woman was not content with providing food, but out of reverence for the character of the visitor, desired to provide a lodging also.

I perceive that this is *a holy man of God*] Probably before the first invitation the woman had learnt something of Elisha's work and the reason of his frequent journeys. Now when he became their guest she had full opportunity of enquiring from Gehazi, and observing for herself the way in which he laboured to keep alive the true worship of God in the land. The existence of a family like this of the Shunammite is evidence that amid much corruption God was not yet forgotten in the ten tribes. The name 'man of God' was applied to Elijah (1 Kings xvii. 24) by the widow of Zarephath after she had beheld what great

10 which passeth by us continually. Let us make a little chamber, I pray thee, on the wall; and let us set for him there a bed, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick: and it shall be, when he cometh to us, *that* he shall turn in
11 thither. And it fell on a day, that he came thither, and he
12 turned into the chamber, and lay there. And he said to Gehazi his servant, Call this Shunammite. And when he had
13 called her, she stood before him. And he said unto him,

things God did through his ministry. She added also 'the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth', which probably represents much of the feeling of the Shunammite when she spake of Elisha as 'holy'.

10. *Let us make*] The R.V. brings 'I pray thee' to follow these words according to the Hebrew order.

a little chamber...on the wall] The Hebrew might mean either a chamber with a wall, a walled room, in contradistinction to one built of wood, or a building above the usual roof of the house and so supported by the walls. The latter seems to be the sense required here, for it is said (verse 21) that the mother *went up* when she wished to lay the dead child upon the prophet's bed. As the roofs of Eastern houses can be reached by a staircase from outside, a chamber on the housetop (cf. Prov. xxi. 9; xxv. 24) would furnish the sort of privacy which Elisha would desire. He could also thus come in and go out without being mixed up with the movements of the household.

a bed] The articles here named form the proper furniture of an Eastern room, where a superabundance of such articles is nowhere found.

a stool] The word is that which is often rendered 'throne', and it probably in this case means the couch or divan which runs along the wall of an Eastern dwelling-room.

he shall turn in] The verb, which is the same as in verse 8, is that which Lot employs (Gen. xix. 2) in his invitation to the two angels. Preparation was made so that the prophet and his servant might be at rest, and come and go when they pleased. As a halting place in a long journey it would be very acceptable.

12. *to Gehazi his servant*] Gehazi is mentioned in this narrative, in ch. v. 20 and the following verses, and again in ch. viii. 4. He probably stood in the same position to Elisha which the latter had held towards Elijah, though the men were utterly different in character. Gehazi appears from viii. 4 to have been a person of consequence enough to be known to, and conversed with, by the king. See note there.

she stood before him] i.e. before Elisha. It is clear that Elisha's character inspired great reverence, and though the Shunammite was his hostess she did not come unbidden into his presence.

13. *And he said unto him*] i.e. Elisha to Gehazi. The prophet does not himself address the woman. Most likely, in all things which he required, Gehazi was his messenger to the house, and so the woman

Say now unto her, Behold, thou hast been careful for us with all this care; what *is* to be done for thee? wouldest thou be spoken for to the king, or to the captain of the host? And she answered, I dwell among mine own people.

would more readily reply to him than to his master. It is clear from what follows that Gehazi was acquainted with the family concerns. There may have been also in Elisha's mind somewhat of the feeling which the disciples of Christ had (John iv. 27) when 'they marvelled that their Master was speaking with a woman'.

thou hast been careful for us with all this care] Both the noun and verb in the original are used of 'fear' and 'trembling'. (Cf. Martha's care and trouble, Luke x. 41.) Hence R.V. in margin gives 'hast shewed us all this reverence'. The use of such words bears out what has just been said of the distance kept between Elisha and the family at Shunem, though they were his entertainers. The verb is used for that fear which came over the guests of Adonijah (1 Kings i. 49) when they found that David had caused Solomon to be proclaimed king. The LXX. recognises the strong meaning of the verb and gives ἐξέστησας ἡμῖν πᾶσαν τὴν ἔκστασιν ταύτην.

wouldest thou be spoken for, &c.] The prophet offers to use his influence, if it can be of any service to his hostess, with the powers of the land. And we cannot but be struck all through his history with the close intimacy which existed between Elisha and the royal family. This was more likely to occur in the reign of Jehoram, than under his brother's rule or his father's. But even of him it is recorded (iii. 2) that he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, and in the expedition against Moab, Elisha declares (iii. 14) that but for the sake of Jehoshaphat he would not waste even a look on Jehoram. There must have been still a great deal of zeal for Jehovah in the northern kingdom to support the prophet, or after such a declaration he would have had little influence with the king, whereas it is the first thing that comes to his mind as a means of rewarding the attention of the Shunammite. On this Bp Hall remarks: 'It is a good hearing that an Elisha is in such grace at the court, that he can promise himself access to the king, in a friend's suit. It was not ever thus. The time was when his master heard, "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?" Now the late miracle which Elisha wrought, in gratifying the three kings with water and victory, hath endeared him to the king of Israel; and now, Who but Elisha?'

or to the captain of the host] If we may take Joab, in David's time, as an example, this officer possessed immense influence. The same opinion would be formed from the history of Abner, who was captain of Saul's host, and so powerful as to be able to bring the tribes who had favoured Ishbosheth over to the side of David (2 Sam. iii. 8—12).

And she answered, I dwell among mine own people] If the king or the captain of the host were to be appealed to, it must be for some case of hardship and oppression. The Shunammite shews she has no necessity of this kind, for all those among whom she lives are friends

14 And he said, What then *is* to be done for her? And Gehazi
answered, Verily she hath no child, and her husband is old.
15 And he said, Call her. And when he had called her, she
16 stood in the door. And he said, About this season, accord-
ing to the time of life, thou shalt embrace a son. And she
said, Nay, my lord, thou man of God, do not lie unto thine
17 handmaid. And the woman conceived, and bare a son at
that season that Elisha had said unto her, according to the
time of life.
18 And when the child was grown, it fell on a day, that he

and relatives. There is no foe to ask protection against, and the kindred are enough to secure her against enemies.

14. *And he said*] Clearly, to Gehazi. This the LXX. adds.

Verily she hath no child] R.V. **son.** The R.V. is correct, though it seems from the whole narrative that the woman was childless. Of the great grief felt from want of children we learn in the history of Hannah (1 Sam. i. 10, 11). Gehazi had probably learnt that this was a sorrow in the family at Shunem.

15. *And he said, Call her*] It would seem from these words that the woman had gone away at once after saying she had no wants which needed a petition to the king or the captain of the host.

she stood in the door] Her reverence for Elisha kept her at the threshold.

16. *according to the time of life*] R.V. **when the time cometh round.** The literal sense of the verb is explained on the margin of R.V. =liveth, or reviveth. The phrase is the same which is used Gen. xviii. 14 to the childless Sarah before the birth of Isaac.

thou man of God] She appeals to him in the character which she felt to be most sacred; the character which had at first (see verse 9) made her desirous to entertain him.

do not lie unto thine handmaid] The verb in all its directness is common in Hebrew in very solemn expressions. Thus Num. xxiii. 19, 'God is not a man that *he should lie*', and of God's word (Hab. ii. 3), 'It shall speak and not *lie*'. The blessing promised was so great, and appeared so unlikely of fulfilment, that the woman implores Elisha not to raise false expectations in such a matter.

17. Here by rendering as in the previous verse the R.V. involves a change of order in the English but conforms thereby more nearly to the Hebrew order. 'And the woman conceived, and bare a son at that season, when the time came round, as Elisha had said unto her'.

18—37. THE CHILD OF THE SHUNAMMITE DIES, AND IS RESTORED TO LIFE BY ELISHA. (Not in Chronicles.)

18. *And when the child was grown*] During the years which had elapsed since the birth of the child the journeys of the prophet between Samaria and Carmel had no doubt still continued, and the

went out to his father to the reapers. And he said unto 19
his father, My head, my head. And he said to a lad, Carry
him to his mother. And when he had taken him, and 20
brought him to his mother, he sat on her knees till noon,
and *then* died. And she went up, and laid him on the bed 21
of the man of God, and shut *the door* upon him, and went
out. And she called unto her husband, and said, Send me, 22
I pray thee, one of the young men, and one of the asses,

feeling of reverence felt by the Shunammite at first, had grown, as we see from the subsequent narrative, into complete trust, a trust which sends her to Carmel when her sorrow comes, and makes her cling to Elisha as her chief hope for relief. 'As the Lord liveth and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee'.

to his father to the reapers] The whole picture is of a well-to-do home, where all was abundant. The husband is of the condition of Boaz (Ruth ii. 1), and servants of various kinds are ready for every duty.

19. *My head, my head*] The description points to an attack of sunstroke, where the first symptom is pain in the head. But the father thinks lightly of it, for such attacks are more frequent with older persons than with children. He merely tells a servant to carry the child home. Sunstroke is alluded to in Ps. cxxi. 6, and it was from it that Manasses the husband of Judith died, in the barley harvest (Judith viii. 2, 3).

to a lad] R.V. **to his servant.** The Hebrew has a definite noun 'to the servant', i.e. who was at hand to carry out any order the master might give. Hence the change in R.V.

20. *he sat on her knees till noon*] The attack was in the early part of the day, when the oblique rays of the sun appear to be most dangerous. The mother's affection shews itself in her unbroken attention.

21. *she went up, and laid him on the bed of the man of God*] Her thoughts at once go to Elisha and she puts the dead boy into the prophet's chamber, perhaps with the thought that she will bring Elisha back with her, and then he will find the child at once. Or it may be that she felt there would be less fear of intruders there. This latter reason is supported by her further action of shutting the door. What hopes she may have had we can only conjecture, but she acts as though she believed that help was not impossible. 'The good Shunammite hath lost her son, her faith she hath not lost' (Bp Hall).

22. *And she called unto her husband*] He appears to have been at no great distance; though the verb is used at times of a message sent by a servant. Thus Num. xxiv. 10 Balak says to Balaam, 'I called thee to curse mine enemies'. Cf. also Jud. xii. 1; 1 Kings i. 10, 19, 26.

one of the young men] R.V. **servants.** The same word which in verse 19 was rendered 'lad'. There were servants who could be spared though the harvest was in hand.

one of the asses] The ass was the usual beast for riding on a journey.

23 that I may run to the man of God, and come again. And
he said, Wherefore wilt thou go to him to day? *it is* neither
new moon, nor sabbath. And she said, *It shall be* well.
24 Then she saddled an ass, and said to her servant, Drive,
and go *forward;* slack not *thy* riding for me, except I bid
25 thee. So she went and came unto the man of God to
mount Carmel. And it came to pass, when the man of
God saw her afar off, that he said to Gehazi his servant,

In such a country as Palestine the surefootedness of the animal is invaluable.

that I may run to the man of God] The request causes her husband little astonishment. We may therefore conclude that for religious purposes such visits had not been uncommon in the Shunamite's life.

23. it is *neither new moon, nor sabbath*] These were the principal occasions of assembling for worship, and it is clear from this history that even in Israel, while the house of Ahab was still on the throne, religious services were regularly held by the prophets in the name of Jehovah. The prophets performed all the duties of the priesthood where it was impossible to have the services of priests or Levites. Thus Elijah sacrificed on Mt Carmel before the slaughter of the priests of Baal (1 Kings xviii. 33). And for purposes of teaching and prayer they appear to have observed the days specially appointed in the Law. On the observance of the new moon cf. 1 Sam. xx. 5, 18, 24. For its institution see Numb. x. 10; xxviii. 11. In the latter passage is a description of the sacrifice to be offered; and we know from the Psalms (lxxxi. 3) that it was celebrated with the sound of the trumpet. On the observance when it came to be without any spiritual reality, see Isaiah i. 14.

It shall be *well*] The Heb. word is literally 'Peace'. But it is used in salutations and enquiries after the welfare of another, as below in verse 26. Here however the woman appears to use it as a means of putting aside further questioning. So it would be equivalent to 'Let be'. 'Say no more'. 'Let me have my way'.

24. *slack not* thy *riding for me*] R.V. **slacken me not the riding.** The R.V. thus avoids the pronominal adjective, which has no equivalent in the Hebrew. The servant seems to have been one to run by the side of the rider as a driver, and as a protection, to be ready also in case of mishap. Such runners were not uncommon in the East, being especially used by dignified persons. So Adonijah (1 Kings i. 5) and Absalom before him (2 Sam. xv. 1) provided themselves with attendants of this sort, when they were aspiring to be kings. The rendering of A.V. would suggest that the servant was riding, but the Hebrew does not warrant this, and for women to travel thus riding behind a manservant on the same beast is not like Eastern custom.

25. *to mount Carmel*] The distance would occupy five or six hours riding. (Bunsen, *Bibelwerk.*) The LXX. inserts at the beginning of this verse a further direction to the servant. 'Come, set forth and go

Behold, *yonder is* that Shunammite: run now, I pray thee, 26
to meet her, and say unto her, *Is it* well with thee? *is it*
well with thy husband? *is it* well with the child? And she
answered, *It is* well. And when she came to the man of 27
God to the hill, she caught him by the feet: but Gehazi
came near to thrust her away. And the man of God said,
Let her alone; for her soul *is* vexed within her: and the
LORD hath hid *it* from me, and hath not told me. Then 28

to the man of God to Mount Carmel'. This is a result of reading the Hebrew words twice over.

Probably from previous visits both the Shunammite and her servant were familiar with the road; for the whole narrative gives the impression that on Carmel there was a centre of prophetic teaching and religious worship, and that the family from Shunem were among the frequenters thereof. Elisha discerns her coming in the distance and is able to say to Gehazi who she is some time before she arrives.

that [R.V. the] *Shunammite*] The pronoun of the original is, except in this instance, connected with masculine nouns. It is better to consider it here as rendered by 'yonder', which the A.V. puts in italics. It is demonstrative in force, and the noun has its own article.

26. *run now, I pray thee*] The R.V. puts 'now' last of these words, 'I pray thee' is closely joined with 'run' in the Hebrew. There is a touch of deep feeling in the action of Elisha. He knows that there must be some special reason for a visit at this unusual time, and he would learn, even before the mother is near enough for him to hear her, whether there is trouble at home which has brought her to Carmel.

And she answered, It is *well*] The word means, as was noted on verse 23, Peace, and we can only think that she gives this answer to Gehazi's question, that she may avoid more words. She has no thought of deception, but her heart is too full for speech, at all events till she come into the prophet's presence.

27. *to the hill*] Elisha had been standing on a height which enabled him to command a view of the road for some distance.

she caught him by the feet] She fell down, and clung to his feet in the attitude of humblest supplication. Cf. Matth. xviii. 29, where the servant adopts this suppliant posture when appealing to his fellow for mercy.

Gehazi came near to thrust her away] The word in other places indicates a considerable degree of force. The servant thought that the dignity of his master was not sufficiently regarded by the Shunammite, and would have taken her away.

The Lord hath hid it *from me*] We need not conclude from these words that the prophet expected to be warned supernaturally concerning those who were likely to come to seek his help. We know from other instances that the prophets were in many cases no more enlightened than others. In 2 Sam. vii. 3, Nathan bids David do all that is in his heart for the Lord is with him. But presently he is sent to inform the king that God will not give him leave to build the temple, as he wished.

she said, Did I desire a son of my lord? did I not say, Do
29 not deceive me? Then he said to Gehazi, Gird up thy
loins, and take my staff in thine hand, and go *thy way:*
if thou meet any man, salute him not; and if any salute
thee, answer him not *again:* and lay my staff upon the face
30 of the child. And the mother of the child said, *As* the
LORD liveth, and *as* thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee.
31 And he arose, and followed her. And Gehazi passed on
before them, and laid the staff upon the face of the child;

The family at Shunem had been made by the prophet a subject of intercession with the Lord. It is therefore not unnatural that Elisha should consider that their misfortunes might be specially announced. We must suppose that, after her grief had spent somewhat of its force, she opens it to Elisha, and follows her narration with the words of the next verse.

28. *Did I desire a son*] The words are almost reproachful and make it clear to the prophet that the child is dead. Better had it been for her not to have had the child given to her, than now to have the great sorrow of losing him.

Do not deceive me] She does not use the stronger term which occurs in the earlier part of the narrative (verse 16).

29. *Gird up thy loins*] With the loose flowing garments of Orientals it is needful when haste is desired, to gather them up and bind them together so that they do not impede the traveller. This is done by a band round the waist.

take my staff in thine hand] It is not easy to see the purpose of this order. The staff was to be laid on the face of the child, but it produced no effect. It may be that Elisha thought God would allow the restoration of the child on the imposition of the staff. Some have supposed that the action was meant to teach those who knew of it, that the miracle was not to be ascribed to any external agency, but only to God's intervention in answer to prayer. Others have thought that the lack of faith in the mother, who would not go back without Elisha, caused the first measures adopted to be ineffective. Perhaps the prophet only sent on Gehazi that the mother might feel that something was being done, and be soothed in her distress.

if thou meet any man, salute him not] An injunction necessary in the East where the salutations are full of form, and consume much time. Cf. our Lord's language to the seventy (Luke x. 4).

30. *I will not leave thee*] Whether the staff sent by Gehazi may have an effect, she cannot know. Her only security is in Elisha's presence, and with him she will return to her desolated home. It seems as though the prophet had not at first intended to go with her, but she will take no refusal, so he prepares for the journey. 'She, not regarding the staff or the man, holds fast to Elisha. No hopes of his message can loose her fingers. She imagined that the servant, the staff, might be severed from Elisha: she knew that wherever the prophet was, there was power' (Bp Hall).

but *there was* neither voice, nor hearing. Wherefore he went again to meet him, and told him, saying, The child is not awaked. And when Elisha was come into the house, 32
behold, the child was dead, *and* laid upon his bed. He 33
went in therefore, and shut the door upon them twain, and prayed unto the LORD. And he went up, and lay upon 34
the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes

31. there was *neither voice, nor hearing*] In the margin both **A.V.** and R.V. give 'attention' as the literal meaning of the last word. It is the same which in the account of Elijah's contest with the Baal-priests (1 Kings xviii. 29) is translated 'any that regarded'. Here it means that no sign of returning life was seen. The word is used as an adverb 'diligently' after the cognate verb 'to hearken' in Is. xxi. 7.

Wherefore he went again] R.V. **returned.** The same word is so rendered below in verse 35.

The child is not awaked] This does not mean that Gehazi thought the child was not dead. He knew this as well as the mother. But 'sleep', even in the Old Testament, is used for its more dreadful sister 'death'. Cf. Job xiv. 12; Ps. xiii. 3; Jer. li. 57. The common phrase on the death of a king is 'he slept with his fathers'. See 1 Kings i. 21.

32. *upon his bed*] i.e. Elisha's bed, in the chamber which was set apart for the prophet and in which the mother had left her child.

33. *shut the door upon them twain*] There is to be no witness, no parade made of the child's restoration. The act is in character like that enjoined above in verse 4.

and prayed unto the Lord] The whole narrative must be compared with the action of Elijah at Zarephath (1 Kings xvii. 17—23). There the words of the prophet's prayer are given. It is to be noted that the prayer precedes every other action. Without that all else will be of no avail.

34. *And he went up*] The verb is used in 2 Kings i. 4, of getting upon a bed. For some old beds it is very appropriate, for formerly they were much higher from the ground than is now the fashion.

and lay upon the child] (Cf. 1 Kings xvii. 21.) Probably Elisha knew of the acts of Elijah at Zarephath, and followed that example. The answer to his prayer seems to have been less immediate than in Elijah's case. Throughout the history there is a degree less of fervency in Elisha's actions and hence the less quickly availing prayer.

Comparing the two prophets, Bp Hall says: 'How true an heir is Elisha of his master, not in his graces only but in his actions. Both of them divided the waters of Jordan, the one as his last act, the other as his first. Elijah's curse was the death of the captains and their troops; Elisha's curse was the death of the children: Elijah rebuked Ahab to his face; Elisha, Jehoram: Elijah supplied the drought of Israel by rain from heaven; Elisha supplied the drought of the three kings by waters gushing out of the earth: Elijah increased the oil of the Sareptan; Elisha increased the oil of the prophet's widow: Elijah raised from

upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands: and he stretched himself upon the child; and the flesh of the child
35 waxed warm. Then he returned, and walked in the house to and fro; and went up, and stretched himself upon him: and the child neesed seven times, and the child opened his
36 eyes. And he called Gehazi, and said, Call this Shunammite. So he called her. And when she was come in unto
37 him, he said, Take up thy son. Then she went in, and fell at his feet, and bowed herself to the ground, and took up her son, and went out.
38 And Elisha came again to Gilgal: and *there was* a dearth

death the Sareptan's son; Elisha, the Shunammite's: both of them had one mantle, one spirit; both of them climbed up one Carmel, one heaven'.

stretched himself upon the child] R.V. **upon him**. So the Hebrew, and there can be no misunderstanding such as to require the noun to be repeated.

the flesh of the child waxed warm] The returning life is slowly given, but the first signs of restoration must have strengthened the zeal, and given fervour to the prayers which no doubt filled every moment of the time of waiting and watching.

35. *Then he returned*] i.e. left the bed.

and walked in the house to and fro] The R.V. inserts 'once' before 'to and fro', which is according to the Hebrew. The exertion which he had used, and the emotion and anxiety he felt, would be overpowering. Hence the need for a change of posture. Elisha did not leave the chamber but walked from end to end of the room in which the child lay.

the child opened his eyes] The second effort, supported as it was, we may be sure, by repeated prayer, obtains a gracious answer. The dead child is brought to life.

36. *Take up thy son*] Cf. Christ's words, Luke vii. 15.

37. *fell at his feet*] In token of her deep gratitude. This she shews before she will give way to the natural feeling of joy over her restored child. She bowed herself to the ground before Elisha, reverencing in him the God, who had so mightily answered his prayers.

38—41. ELISHA AT GILGAL HEALS THE NOXIOUS POTTAGE. (Not in Chronicles.)

38. *Elisha came again to Gilgal*] There are no notes of time in this narrative, or in the others, though we can see, here and there, that the events are not put together chronologically. (See below, on viii. 1.) Elisha had been at Gilgal with Elijah, but there is no need to suppose that 'came again' alludes to that visit. Gilgal (on which see note on ii. 1 above) was a centre of prophetic activity and it is probable that it was visited frequently both by Elijah and Elisha.

in the land; and the sons of the prophets *were* sitting before him: and he said unto his servant, Set on the great pot, and seethe pottage for the sons of the prophets. And one went 39
out into the field to gather herbs, and found a wild vine, and gathered thereof wild gourds his lap full, and came and shred *them* into the pot of pottage: for they knew *them* not. So they poured out for the men to eat. And it came to 40
pass, as they were eating of the pottage, that they cried out,

and there was *a dearth in the land*] The first noun has the article, and the clause might well be rendered '*the* famine was in the land'. The allusion will then be to the famine foretold in viii. 1. That some of the incidents related before that chapter occurred after the famine, see note on viii. 4.

the sons of the prophets were *sitting before him*] They would naturally gather round the great prophet, made famous by a large share of Elijah's spirit, and catch at all he had to say. We can see from this story one aspect of the life in the colleges of the prophets. The members sat at the feet of some elder member, and learnt from him their duty and how to carry it out. (Cf. vi. 1, and note.) By Elisha's teaching, which would be drawn from his own experience, they would gather faith and courage, seeing that God was working in their midst, and had not forsaken Israel in spite of their sins. Hence grew the hope of a thorough reformation in the breasts of these who must be regarded as the reformers of their time.

unto his servant] Probably some one of the sons of the prophets, appointed to wait on Elisha while he tarried at Gilgal.

39. *And one went out*] As the needful services were performed by the members of the college among themselves, it was no doubt one of them who went into the field to gather such herbs as he could find.

a wild vine] i.e. some wild plant with vine-like tendrils, named here 'vine' for want of knowledge of its true name. The colocynth has tendrils after the fashion of the wild bryony in our hedgerows.

wild gourds] The Hebrew word is explained as meaning 'wild cucumber', an egg-shaped fruit with very bitter taste. But the prickly fruit of this plant could hardly be thought fit for pottage. Others think that the 'colocynth' is meant, and this was the opinion of the LXX., which renders by τολυπὴ ἀγρία, 'wild pumpkin'. This fruit might be mistaken for a melon.

for they knew them *not*] Nobody among the brotherhood had sufficient skill of plants to stop their comrade, and tell him the noxious nature of the herb he had brought home.

40. *they cried out*] The bitter taste shewed them that something was wrong, and their thoughts at once suggested that what they had eaten was poisonous. The fruit of the colocynth would produce sickness very soon, but there is no reason to suppose that there was enough in the pottage to kill.

and said, O thou man of God, *there is* death in the pot.
41 And they could not eat *thereof*. But he said, Then bring meal. And he cast *it* into the pot; and he said, Pour out for the people, that they may eat. And there was no harm in the pot.
42 And there came a man from Baal-shalisha, and brought the man of God bread of the firstfruits, twenty loaves of barley, and full ears of corn in the husk thereof. And he

O thou man of God] The R.V. omits 'thou', and thus improves both rhythm and language.

they could not eat thereof] They had only just tasted the noxious dish and so no ill effects had followed.

41. *bring meal*] He employs something which is wholesome and nourishing as a sign of the change that was to be wrought in the pottage. But we are not to attribute healing virtue to the meal that was used, any more than we should think that the salt (2 Kings ii. 21) was the means of healing the waters at Jericho.

42—44. ELISHA FEEDS ONE HUNDRED MEN WITH TWENTY LOAVES. (Not in Chronicles.)

44. *from Baal-shalisha*] R.V. **Baal-shalishah.** The name is found only here, and the LXX. writes it Βαιθαρισὰ or Βαθσαρισά, as though in this instance *Baal* had been interchangeable with the more common Hebrew prefix, in geographical names, *Beth*. The place cannot have been remote from Gilgal. The 'land of Shalishah' was close to mount Ephraim, as we see in the account of Saul's search for the asses (1 Sam. ix. 4). Probably Baal-shalishah was one village or town of this district.

bread of the firstfruits] On the custom of bringing an offering to the prophets, cf. 1 Sam. ix. 7. In that case the present was spoken of in connexion with some enquiry to be made from him. And it may have been so here, though as the offering was from the first fruits, it may have been brought as a religious duty (cf. Lev. xxiii. 14) and presented to Elisha, as the representative of God, in this time when there was no place to which such offerings could be brought. If this be so, it is another token, among many, that the law of Jehovah was not forgotten by some among the people in the northern kingdom.

full [R.V. **fresh**] *ears of corn*] This is the rendering of one word in the Hebrew, which from its use elsewhere seems to mean the first gathered and best of the corn. The interpreters explain it, some of the grain itself, some of the flour made from it. But the leading idea is its newness, hence the change to 'fresh' instead of 'full'. The passages for comparison are Lev. ii. 14; xxiii. 14, in each of which the change has been made to 'fresh' in R.V.

in the husk thereof] R.V. **in his sack.** The word is only found here. It is agreed however that it signifies some sort of bag. The A.V. took it of the covering of the grain, but the Vulgate gives *pera*, i.e., a scrip or

said, Give unto the people, that they may eat. And his servitor said, What, should I set this before an hundred men? He said again, Give the people, that they may eat: for thus saith the LORD, They shall eat, and shall leave *thereof*. So he set *it* before them, and they did eat, and left *thereof*, according to the word of the LORD. 43 44

Now Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honourable, because by him the LORD had given deliverance unto Syria: he was 5

wallet. The Complutensian text of the LXX. supports this rendering, the Alexandrine version attempts a transliteration of the unusual word.

43. *And his servitor* [R.V. **servant**] *said*] The word is not the usual one for 'servant' which has occurred above in this chapter; but it is rendered elsewhere by 'minister' or 'servant' (see Exod. xxiv. 13; xxxiii. 11), and nowhere but here 'servitor'. As the word is used, in the passages referred to, of Joshua, the minister of Moses, it seems likely that Gehazi, the special attendant on Elisha, is here meant.

before an hundred men] Probably the number of the prophetic college at Gilgal. We have seen above (ii. 7) that these communities had many members, not all perhaps resident regularly, but likely to gather in full force when Elisha was visiting their society.

He said again] R.V. **But he said.** There is nothing in the text to warrant the 'again'.

44. *they did eat, and left* thereof] Compare with this the miracles of our Lord (Matth. xiv. 15—21; xv. 32—38; John vi. 5—14). In this account of Elisha there is however not much dwelling on the increase of the bread by a miracle, and we are left to accept the result as either brought about in that way, or by the appetites of the men being satisfied with a small quantity.

The LXX. omits 'so he set it before them' at the commencement of this verse.

CH. V. 1—14. THE CURE OF NAAMAN'S LEPROSY. (Not in Chronicles.)

1. *honourable*] An attempt is made by the LXX. to translate literally the Hebrew expression which is the same as in Is. iii. 3. *τεθαυμασμένος προσώπῳ*, 'admired in the eyes of'. The idea is the passive of 'an acceptor of persons'. Hence 'one accepted and acceptable'.

because by him the Lord had given deliverance] R.V. **victory.** That the Lord was the deliverer is the thought of the Jewish writer. The Syrians would have put the case differently. It is however a matter of interest to note that Jehovah was not regarded by the compiler of this narrative as exclusively the God of the Jews, nor the Gentiles thought to be beyond, or deprived of, His care. He helps them though they know Him not.

deliverance unto Syria] That Naaman was the man 'who drew a

2 also a mighty *man* in valour, *but he was* a leper. And the
Syrians had gone out *by* companies, and had brought away
captive out of the land of Israel a little maid; and she
3 waited on Naaman's wife. And she said unto her mistress,
Would God my lord *were* with the prophet that *is* in
4 Samaria; for he would recover him of his leprosy. And
one went in, and told his lord, saying, Thus and thus said

bow at a venture' and smote Ahab at Ramoth Gilead, and thus gained victory for Syria, is a conjecture of Jewish commentators for which there is not the smallest foundation. About this time the Assyrians invaded Syria and the countries round about, and it is not improbable that this was the war in which Naaman had gained his fame.

a mighty man *in* [R.V. of] *valour*] The phrase occurs many times, and nowhere but here is the preposition 'in' used, but always 'of'. The disease with which Naaman was afflicted must have been of a less malignant character than leprosy mostly is, otherwise he would have been physically incapable of soldierly duties.

a leper] The laws of the Jews concerning the separation of lepers from the rest of the people are given in Lev. xiii. and xiv., and are extremely stringent. Clearly in Syria there were no such regulations, for Naaman goes with the host to war, returns and lives at home with his wife and the household, and attends on the king when he goes to worship in the house of Rimmon.

2. *had gone out* by *companies*] R.V. in bands. The idea is of plundering parties, who made forays upon their neighbours. So we have in vi. 23, 'The *bands* of Syria came no more into the land of Israel', and in xiii. 20, 'The *bands* of the Moabites invaded the land at the coming in of the year'. The LXX. has *μονόζωνοι*, in the sense of 'girt up', 'lightly equipped', 'ready for warfare'.

a little maid] These marauders carried away captives as well as spoil. The phrase 'waited on', which follows, is literally 'was before'. Servants are said, when in their service, to 'stand before' their masters. See below, verse 25.

3. *Would God*] This interjection is found only here and in Ps. cxix. 5. There it is rendered '*O that* my ways were directed'.

the prophet that is *in Samaria*] Elisha had a house in the city of Samaria, as we see from verse 9, and also from vi. 32. The fame of the prophet, and the mighty cures which God wrought through him, must have been matter of much note ere they reached this little servant.

he would recover him] The verb, which commonly means 'to assemble' or 'gather together', is very expressive in the mouth of the Israelitish maiden, for the leper in Israel must keep himself apart, and never *be gathered* with the rest of the people. The passive is used (Num. xi. 14, 15) when Miriam was cured of her leprosy, 'she was *received in again*', i.e. joined in the company of the rest of the people.

4. *And* one *went in*] On the margin the R.V. has 'he'. But it is

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the maid that *is* of the land of Israel. And the king of 5
Syria said, Go to, go, and I will send a letter unto the
king of Israel. And he departed, and took with him ten
talents of silver, and six thousand *pieces* of gold, and ten
changes of raiment. And he brought the letter to the king 6
of Israel, saying, Now when this letter is come unto thee,
behold, I have *therewith* sent Naaman my servant to thee,

better to insert an indefinite nominative. It is not likely that Naaman himself was the reporter.

and told his lord] i.e., Naaman's lord, the king of Syria. The LXX. disregarding the gender of the verbal form has '*She* went in and told *her* lord': i.e. Naaman's wife brought him word of the damsel's story.

5. *Go to, go*] Naaman was so valued by the king that not a moment must be lost, but he must start to seek for his cure at once.

I will send a letter] There must have existed at this time such relations between Israel and Syria as made correspondence between the two kings possible. The two nations were at peace, as we see from verse 7, where Jehoram expresses his dread of a quarrel. The tone of the king of Israel seems to be that of one who feared Syria, and for that reason wanted to avoid a rupture.

unto the king of Israel] The king is not named, but it seems likely that the activity of Elisha was mainly in the reign of Jehoram, Ahab's son.

and took with him ten talents of silver] At this early date there was no coined money. The silver and the gold were in bars and were paid away by weight. A talent of silver is said to have been worth about £375, and gold was about ten times the value of silver.

six thousand pieces *of gold*] In phrases like this when the Hebrew expression is given fully, the inserted word is usually 'shekels', which the R.V. puts on the margin. See 1 Chron. xxi. 25; 2 Chron. iii. 9. But the shekel was in these days only a weight, as indeed the word signifies; thus we have not only shekels of gold, but shekels of silver (1 Sam. ix. 8); shekels of brass (1 Sam. xvii. 5); and shekels of iron (1 Sam. xvii. 7). When the shekel came to be a coin, the shekel of gold was worth about £2.

ten changes of raiment] Especially valued in the East, and often included in summaries of wealth, and among costly presents. Cf. Gen. xlv. 22; 2 Chron. ix. 24.

6. *he brought the letter to the king of Israel*] The Syrian king would conclude that the prophet was at the king's command, and so he had only to write to the king, and all would be done that could be done.

Now [R.V. **And now**] *when this letter*] This is not the commencement of the letter. The writer only extracts from it the sentence which contains the request. The insertion of the copula 'And' by R.V. shews this, and so represents the Hebrew more exactly.

7 that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy. And it came
to pass, when the king of Israel had read the letter, that he
rent his clothes, and said, *Am* I God, to kill and to make
alive, that this *man* doth send unto me to recover a man of
his leprosy? wherefore consider, I pray you, and see how he
8 seeketh a quarrel against me. And it was *so*, when Elisha
the man of God had heard that the king of Israel had rent
his clothes, that he sent to the king, saying, Wherefore
hast thou rent thy clothes? let him come now to me, and
9 he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel. So Naaman

that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy] The Syrian king speaks as though the cure were to be Jehoram's work. But of course he only required of the king that he should use his power with the mighty prophet. This however can hardly have been made plain in the body of the letter, or Jehoram's thoughts would have turned to Elisha.

7. *that he rent his clothes*] Sometimes the act was a sign of grief as in ii. 12 above and Gen. xxxvii. 29; sometimes as here, of horror and alarm. Cf. also 2 Kings xviii. 36; Ezra ix. 3; Jer. xxxvi. 24.

to kill and to make alive] The disease of leprosy was incurable, and so the request that it should be cured was such as the author of life alone could grant. Cf. for the language Deut. xxxii. 39, 'I, even I, am he, and there is no god with me, I kill and I make alive'. So also in Hannah's song (1 Sam. ii. 6). This is a power that belongs to God only.

doth send unto me] The knowledge of Elisha's mighty acts must have been less before the mind of the king than of his subjects, or he would not have failed to see that the request might be granted by God through his prophet. 'Himself with the two other kings had been eyewitnesses of what Elisha could do, yet now the calves of Dan and Bethel have so often taken up his heart that there is no room for the memory of Elisha. Whom he sued to in his extremity, now his prosperity hath forgotten. Carnal hearts when need drives them can think of God and his prophet: when their turn is served, can as utterly forget them as if they were not' (Bp Hall).

he seeketh a quarrel against me] The verb, in this form and sense, only occurs here, but the cognate noun in the sense of 'an occasion of quarrel' is found Jud. xiv. 4. Hence the R.V. has put 'occasion' on the margin. It is only the one who feels his superiority that ventures on seeking a quarrel, and from the timid words of Jehoram we may conclude that he thought the Syrians more than a match for him; as was only natural, since they had defeated his father at Ramoth-Gilead not long before. He dreaded a renewal of such a conflict.

8. *that he sent to the king*] The prophets of Jehovah were now in no such peril as they had been in Ahab's days. Elisha has his house in the royal city, and has no fear of sending a message to the palace.

that there is a prophet in Israel] i.e. a true messenger of the God

came with his horses and with his chariot, and stood *at* the door of the house of Elisha. And Elisha sent a messenger 10
unto him, saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean.

who can kill and make alive. Cf. the words of the people (Luke vii. 16) when our Lord raised the widow's son at Nain, 'A great prophet is risen up among us, and God hath visited his people'.

9. *with his horses and with his chariot*] R.V. **chariots.** For though the Hebrew word is singular, the sense is 'chariotry', i.e., a number of chariots. In attendance on so great a man as Naaman there would be many persons on horseback and in carriages, and the display would seem such as to draw even the prophet forth to behold.

10. *Elisha sent a messenger unto him*] The princely cavalcade waited at Elisha's door, but the prophet did not come forth. We need not think of him as avoiding a leprous person, either from fear of infection, or from legal scruples. It was rather that he wished to prevent any thought of himself as the worker of the cure coming into Naaman's mind. The Syrian captain's idea was, as we can see from the sequel, that Jehovah was specially the God of the land of Israel. If he were sent to one of the streams of that land, he would be most likely, to connect, as he actually did, his recovery with the might of the God of Israel. The prophet would therefore only be the mouthpiece of Jehovah, and for this reason sent his direction by a messenger.

Go and wash in Jordan] Naaman would be quite sure that the waters of the Jordan were not a cure for leprosy, otherwise there would have been no lepers in Israel. The journey from Samaria to the river would be a great test of his faith, and would set the matter before him in a very different aspect from that in which he had before viewed it. He had come as a mighty person to present his request to a king. He is first of all brought to the humble door of the prophet, and from thence sent on a further journey to what he would naturally look on as an insignificant stream. It was not to the king, nor the prophet, nor the river, that his healing could be ascribed if it were effected. We can understand how difficult this new lesson was for Naaman to learn.

seven times] Since the seven days of God's first week, the number 'seven' has been held somewhat more sacred than other numbers. Hence its frequent mention in religious services and ceremonial. Cf. also its occurrence in the narrative of the deluge; in the appointment of the passover; in the observances connected with the cleansing of lepers, which may account for the use of the number in the present narrative. It was the number of the priests who blew with trumpets before the ark as the people entered the holy land, and for seven days they were to compass Jericho, and on the seventh day to do so seven times. These are but a few out of the instances in which the number is similarly used.

and thy flesh shall come again to thee] The expression is well suited to the case, for in leprosy the body or the part affected is covered with an incrustation, so that the flesh seems all to have disappeared.

11 But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold,
I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and
call on the name of the LORD his God, and strike his hand
12 over the place, and recover the leper. *Are* not Abana and

and thou shalt be clean] The Hebrew has the imperative 'and be thou clean', as is noted on the margin of R.V. Elisha is speaking as Jehovah's minister, thus the imperative is not unfitting, and calls to mind the words of Christ to another leper (Matth. viii. 3) 'I will, *be thou clean*. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed'.

11. *But Naaman was wroth*] He had expected that his wish would have been accomplished at once, and that more display would have been made over a case like his. The God of Israel would receive some credit for the cure of the Syrian commander. And was he to be sent off in this way, without any parade or notice, to wash in the muddy waters of the Jordan?

Behold, I thought] Literally 'I said unto myself'. The same verb is rendered 'thought' in Gen. xx. 11; Numb. xxiv. 11; Ruth iv. 4, &c.

and strike [R.V. **wave**] *his hand over the place*] The verb is the one so constantly used to describe the manner of the wave-offering (Exod. xxix. 24, 26; Lev. ix. 21; xiv. 12, 24). It is also used of waving the hand as a signal (Is. x. 32; xiii. 2), or in anger (Zech. ii. 9). Naaman's notion seems to have been that Elisha would rub his hand backward and forward, over the affected parts; or perhaps make passes over them.

12. Are *not Abana* [R.V. **Abanah**] *and Pharpar, rivers* [R.V. **the rivers**] *of Damascus*] There is a marginal reading *Amanah* in the Hebrew, but it is not well supported. The Abanah has been identified with the larger of the two rivers which now water Damascus. Its present name is 'Barada', and the Arabic version of this verse writes 'Barda' for Abanah. The second river is now named 'Awaj' and does not flow so close to the city, but one branch of it is still called 'Wady *Barbar*' in which we may probably trace the remnant of the ancient name 'Pharpar'. Compared with the Jordan, these, especially the Abanah, must have appeared far superior, both in waters, for the Jordan is often muddy, and in the beauty of the scenery through which they flowed. Robinson (II. 255) describes the Jordan as a 'deep, sluggish, discoloured stream'.

Bp Hall observes here: 'Nowhere shall we find a truer pattern of the disposition of nature: how she is altogether led by sense and reason: how she fondly judges of all objects by the appearance: how she acquaints herself only with the common road of God's proceedings: how she sticks to her own principles: how she misconstrues the intentions of God: how she over-conceits her own: how she disdains the mean conditions of others: how she upbraids her opposites with the proud comparison of her own privileges. Nature is never but like herself. No marvel if carnal minds despise the foolishness of preaching, the simplicity of sacraments, the homeliness of ceremonies, the seeming inefficacy of censures. These men look upon Jordan with Syrian eyes:

Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage. And his servants came 13
near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, *if* the prophet had bid thee *do some* great thing, wouldest thou not have done *it?* how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean? Then went he down, and dipped 14
himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.

And he returned to the man of God, he and all his 15

one drop of whose water, set apart by divine ordination, hath more virtue than all the streams of Abanah and Pharpar.'

13. *his servants came near*] As the chief ministers of the king are called 'servants' though they probably are of distinguished rank; so the servants of Naaman were probably persons nearly his equals in everything except reputation, and so they could come and speak freely to him, without fear of giving offence.

My father] One of them of course was spokesman for the rest. There is no other instance where servants address their master in such terms. Elisha's exclamation when Elijah was taken away from him does not come into comparison. Joseph says (Gen. xlv. 8) that God has made him a father to Pharaoh, but this is not quite the same sort of relationship. The word however, which because it is unusual some have endeavoured to explain as a corruption, indicates the affectionate relations which existed between Naaman and those about him, and prepares us for his ready listening to their persuasion.

some *great thing*] They are thinking perhaps of some deed of prowess, befitting the 'mighty man of valour', or some fatiguing journey by way of pilgrimage.

14. *Then went he down*] His rage had first gone down, and thus he was in a fitter condition to undertake the journey commanded him.

and dipped himself *seven times*] Not only in the journey to the river, which was without any display, and merely terminated in some lonely spot on the river's brink, but also in the repeated dippings was the faith of Naaman put to the test. For if we may judge from the fall of the walls of Jericho, which stood unmoved till the last time the ark was carried round them, it seems probable that the cure did not shew itself till the whole of the ablutions were completed.

like unto the flesh of a little child] In striking contrast to its former foul and diseased condition, it now became fresher and fairer than was natural in a full grown man.

15—19. NAAMAN'S GRATITUDE. HIS IMPERFECT KNOWLEDGE MAKES HIS PRACTICE IMPERFECT. (Not in Chronicles.)

15. *And he returned to the man of God*] He was a stranger in

company, and came, and stood before him: and he said, Behold, now I know that *there is* no God in all the earth, but in Israel: now therefore, I pray thee, take a blessing of
16 thy servant. But he said, *As* the LORD liveth, before whom I stand, I will receive none. And he urged him to take *it*;
17 but he refused. And Naaman said, Shall there not then, I

Israel, like the Samaritan among the ten lepers whom our Lord cured, but like him he also manifested his thankfulness. He came back with all his company, that the thanksgiving might lose nothing of its fulness, and in the presence of them all, proclaims the new knowledge which he has gained, how he has found that 'there is no god who can deliver after this sort'.

came, and stood before him] His feelings and attitude are alike changed, and so the prophet now shews himself to him. Naaman has begun his lesson in the school of Jehovah and Elisha is ready to encourage his weak steps.

no God in all the earth, but in Israel] He has still his notion of different gods assigned to different lands, and does not conceive that Jehovah may be the God of all the earth. He is the God of Israel only, but all that are called gods elsewhere are not to be compared to Him.

take a blessing [R.V. **present**] *of thy servant*] Because with a present there generally is given good wishes and benediction, the Hebrews frequently used 'blessing' as here for 'a gift'. Thus (Gen. xxxiii. 11) Jacob calls the present which he had prepared for Esau by this name. 'Take I pray thee, my *blessing*'. Cf. also Jud. i. 15; 1 Sam. xxv. 27; xxx. 26 (with margin).

16. *I will receive none*] Just as in the earlier part of his conduct Elisha had done everything to direct Naaman's attention to Jehovah alone as the healer of his disease; so now he will have no gift for himself, lest thereby he should mar the effect of the previous lesson. Heathen priests and prophets were noted for the greed with which they received and demanded rewards. With the servants of the God of Israel there could be nothing of this kind. It was not of them, except as instruments, that the help came, and the gratitude must be paid where it was due. So in spite of much urging, Elisha would receive nothing. He *stood before the Lord*, and feeling whose servant he was, he must direct all honour to be offered to his Master.

17. *And Naaman said, Shall there not then, I pray thee, be given*] R.V. **If not, yet I pray thee, let there be given.** The reason for the variation lies in a comprehension of the grammatical force of the Hebrew. There is no mark of interrogation in the verse, but neither is there any word for 'if' which the R.V. gives. But the Hebrew can express a hypothetical clause without the insertion of any such particle. Literally the original has 'And Naaman said, and not' &c. by which is meant 'and if not &c.', i.e. 'if it may not be as I wish, and you will not receive a present, yet &c.' Thus in Gen. xliv. 22 the literal render-

pray thee, be given to thy servant two mules' burden of earth? for thy servant will henceforth offer neither burnt offering nor sacrifice unto other gods, but unto the LORD. In this thing the LORD pardon thy servant, *that* when my 18
master goeth *into* the house of Rimmon to worship there,

ing is 'and he leaves his father, and he will die', which the A.V. rightly represents by 'for if he leave...he will die'. And more like the present example is 2 Sam. xiii. 26, where David has objected to Absalom's too liberal invitation, 'And Absalom said, and not [i.e. and if it may not be] yet let my brother Amnon go with us'. The LXX. renders rightly καὶ εἰ μή.

two mules' burden of earth] Naaman still has no notion of Jehovah but as a territorial deity. He thinks therefore that by carrying with him a quantity of the soil of Israel, he may provide a place for acceptable sacrifice to Him in his country of Syria. It was holy ground and would sanctify all that it came near.

will henceforth offer neither burnt offering] The other so-called gods are worth nothing. This much he has learnt, and so he will himself pay them no homage. But it would be too hard a thing to expect from so new a convert strength enough to become a witness for Jehovah. Hence his petition to God, to which Elisha gives a merciful answer.

18. *the Lord pardon thy servant*] Naaman can see the inconsistency of his conduct. He will offer no more sacrifices to Rimmon. But the king his master worships in Rimmon's temple, and Naaman must be in attendance, and must bow when the king bows down, or he will give offence. He sets his difficulty before Elisha, and Elisha, regarding the degree of his faith and obedience as all that could be expected from his amount of light, gives him a comforting answer. We must judge both Naaman and the prophet according to the times in which they lived. It was impossible for the former at once to cast away all his old ideas. His strongest wish, for some of the soil of the holy land to carry home, bespeaks the darkness in which he had lived and was living, and a new creature is not to be made in a moment out of men like Naaman. Elisha on the other hand had no light such as we have concerning God's message to the heathen; the Jew has not either in ancient or in modern times been a missionary, and we need not judge Elisha hardly, because he felt no call to rebuke the half converted heathen for his imperfect service. The Lord had not yet given His message to any of the chosen people 'Go ye out into all the world'.

Rimmon] The god of the Syrians of Damascus. The name is most likely derived from the Hebrew word *rûm* = to be high; and so signifies 'most high', a natural title to apply to a divinity. The Syrians had the name Tab-Rimmon (1 Kings xv. 18) = good is Rimmon, among the names of their royal family, and the existence of a place called Hadad-Rimmon in the valley of Megiddo (Zech. xii. 11) would seem to indicate that the worship of Rimmon had at some time prevailed in a part of Palestine. Rimmon is mentioned nowhere in the Bible but in this passage.

and he leaneth on my hand, and I bow myself *in* the house of Rimmon: when I bow down myself *in* the house of
19 Rimmon, the LORD pardon thy servant in this thing. And he said unto him, Go in peace. So he departed from him a little way.
20 But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, said, Behold, my master hath spared Naaman this Syrian, in not receiving at his hands *that* which he brought: but, *as* the LORD liveth, I will run after him, and take somewhat
21 of him. So Gehazi followed after Naaman. And when Naaman saw *him* running after him, he lighted down from
22 the chariot to meet him, and said, *Is all* well? And he

19. *Go in peace*] We are not to consider this answer as implying that service of God and service of Rimmon might be combined without any incongruity. The prophet appears rather to be willing to leave the good seed already sown to bear fruit in due season. Being sown of God it must fructify, and peace would be the result of its further development.

a little way] The expression literally signifying 'a length of country' is very indefinite. It is found only here and in Gen. xxxv. 16; xlviii. 7. We may estimate its length roughly by considering how far Gehazi could have gone if he had to overtake a mounted cavalcade. It could not be very far.

20—27. GEHAZI'S LIES AND THEIR PUNISHMENT.
(Not in Chronicles.)

20. *hath spared Naaman this Syrian*] R.V. **this Naaman the Syrian.** The pronoun qualifies the whole expression. Gehazi had been in attendance on Elisha, and heard the whole conversation. There seems to have been no need for an interpreter. The dialects of the whole country were no doubt much akin, and the people could readily understand each other.

as *the Lord liveth*] How little the words meant for Gehazi we can see, when they come to his lips amid his thoughts of the deceit he is meditating. They had a different force when Elisha used them, in verse 16.

21. *And when Naaman saw* him [R.V. **one**] *running after him*] On an Eastern road the travellers were not numerous, and any one in hot pursuit would at once be noticed, and it would be felt that he was anxious that the travellers in front should halt.

he lighted down from the chariot to meet him] As Gehazi approached, Naaman would recognise him; for Gehazi may have been the messenger first sent to bid the Syrian go and wash in Jordan, and he had clearly been by his master's side during the subsequent interview. Anxious therefore to shew his gratitude, the superior lights down from his chariot.

said, *All is* well. My master hath sent me, saying, Behold, even now there be come to me from mount Ephraim two young men of the sons of the prophets: give them, I pray thee, a talent of silver, and two changes of garments. And 23
Naaman said, Be content, take two talents. And he urged him, and bound two talents of silver in two bags, with two changes of garments, and laid *them* upon two of his servants; and they bare *them* before him. And when he 24
came to the tower, he took *them* from their hand, and

This was an act of much condescension, and is an index of Naaman's feeling.

22. *My master hath sent me*] Naaman would naturally rejoice at hearing that circumstances had wrought for an acceptance of the present, which for himself the prophet had refused.

from mount [R.V. **the hill country of**] *Ephraim*] The Gilgal mentioned in the previous chapter [iv. 38] seems to have been near the hill country of Ephraim. There, we know, there was a college of prophets, and in the neighbourhood may have been others. From all these centres the members would come to Elisha for counsel. Gehazi uses one of the probably common incidents of the prophet's life to form the foundation for his deceit. The communities of prophets would naturally be poor, and few things were more likely than that they should reach Samaria in need both of money and clothing. The story was full of plausibility.

a talent of silver] Though a large sum to ask for as aid to the prophets, it would appear but little to the man who had brought ten times as much with him, in addition to six thousand shekels of gold. Hence he gives him twice what he asks, which Gehazi must have counted a wondrous gain.

23. *bound two talents of silver in two bags*] The money was put into the bag, and the opening tied up. The word translated 'bags' (LXX., *θύλακοι*) occurs in the list of female finery in Isaiah iii. 22 and is rendered by R.V. 'satchels'. Probably the bag was of an ornamental character, as the root word signifies 'to engrave'. Perhaps there was some embroidery, or network in its formation.

laid them *upon two of his servants*] For the money must have been of considerable weight, and Naaman having had no opportunity of doing honour to Elisha, would be the more anxious to pay all attention to Gehazi.

24. *when he came to the tower*] R.V. **hill.** The word (Heb., *Ophel*) is often used in connexion with the description of the wall of Jerusalem (2 Chron. xxvii. 3; xxxiii. 14; Neh. iii. 26, 27; xi. 21). From its use in Micah iv. 8, of Mount Zion, the sense 'hill' rather than 'tower' appears well established. The margin of A.V., has here 'secret place' as also the LXX., but that seems to have come from connecting the word with a root of slightly different consonants (אפל instead of עפל). The question arises: What hill is meant? And it appears best to

bestowed *them* in the house: and he let the men go, and
25 they departed. But he went in, and stood before his
master. And Elisha said unto him, Whence *comest thou*,
26 Gehazi? And he said, Thy servant went no whither. And
he said unto him, Went not mine heart *with thee*, when the
man turned *again* from his chariot to meet thee? *Is it*
a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and
oliveyards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and men-
27 servants, and maidservants? The leprosy therefore of
Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed for ever.

understand it of some eminence near the house of Elisha. All Samaria was hilly in character (see 1 Kings xvi. 24). The narrative by this allusion to a locality, as though it were well known, shews its historic character, and appears to go back in its early form to close upon the date of the events.

he took them *from their hand*] Though they were heavy enough for two men, yet he must contrive to carry them himself that he may attract less notice, and run no risk of being found out.

25. *and stood before his master*] He would let his absence be as little noted as possible. In the East the servants are usually kept in waiting. Hence the phrase 'to stand before' is frequent in connexion with Oriental service. Thus David 'stands before' Saul (1 Sam. xvi. 21, 22), so of Abishag (1 Kings i. 2). See also 1 Kings x. 8; Dan. i. 5, &c.

26. *Went not mine heart* with thee] The Hebrew has nothing to represent the last two words, as will be seen from the italics both of A.V. and R.V. But the rendering is that of the LXX., and is probably correct. The verb takes up that which Gehazi had used, 'Thy servant *went* no whither'. On a former occasion Elisha in Gehazi's presence (iv. 27) had said of some event 'the Lord hath not told me', but now he finds that in spirit his master had been with him, and was aware of all that had occurred.

Is it *a time to receive money*] The opportunity of Naaman's visit had been used by Elisha to direct the thoughts of the heathen officer to Jehovah alone as the healer of his disease. Hence he had never shewn himself to Naaman till the cure was complete, and had steadily refused any present lest it should be thought that he deemed himself in any way instrumental in the recovery. Such conduct must have impressed Naaman greatly, and now Gehazi has done his best to obliterate the impression. In the enumeration of all the grand possessions which the ill-gotten talents were to purchase Elisha shews Gehazi that he has been reading all his thoughts.

27. *The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee*] 'Oh heavy talents of Gehazi', says Bishop Hall, 'oh the horror of this one unchangeable suit...How much better had been a light purse and a homely coat, with a sound body and a clear soul'.

And he went out from his presence a leper *as white* as snow.

And the sons of the prophets said unto Elisha, Behold 6
now, the place where we dwell with thee is too strait for us.
Let us go, we pray thee, unto Jordan, and take thence 2
every man a beam, and let us make us a place there, where

a leper as white *as snow*] Both here and elsewhere in this phrase, the words 'as white' are inserted to explain the comparison. Cf. Num. xii. 10. As the incrustation of leprosy is sometimes rather rose-coloured than white, it seems likely that the point of the comparison is not the whiteness only, but that likeness which it bears to a light downlike covering, as if the limbs had been sprinkled over in the manner, though not always with the colour, of snow.

CH. VI. 1—7. ELISHA CAUSETH AN AXE LOST IN THE RIVER TO FLOAT. (Not in Chronicles.)

1. *And the sons of the prophets said unto Elisha*] There is nothing to indicate which out of the various prophetic communities is here spoken of. But by the proposal which follows, that they should go to the Jordan, and bring from thence each man his beam, we may conclude that the place was not far from the river. The station nearest to the Jordan of which we are told is Jericho, and it may be that there the company had grown beyond their buildings.

the place where we dwell with [R.V. before] *thee*] The R.V. is correct, and gives more truly the picture of Elisha's relation to these societies. From the other parts of the history we can gather that he made visits to the several settlements from time to time. And when he arrived, and while he remained, the members were about him as scholars around a teacher. They sat before him (iv. 38). Hence the preposition in this verse.

is too strait for us] The religious activity of the prophetic schools must have been very great during the life of Elisha, and must also have produced its effect upon the life of the nation. We cannot regard these societies merely as retreats from the world, where the servants of Jehovah retired in despair. Such families as that at Shunem, spoken of in the last chapter, must have been of frequent occurrence. And the increase of the number of prophets may be taken as a sign that true religion was growing in the land. 'It is a good hearing that the prophets want elbow-room.' (Bp Hall.)

2. *take thence every man a beam*] The Jordan valley was well timbered. We see from this, as from previous passages, that these men did for themselves such work as they required. Here they are ready to be their own carpenters. Naturally such a body would neither wish for, nor be able to erect, anything but a building of the simplest sort.

make us a place there] They propose to provide entirely new quarters in a new spot in the valley of the Jordan.

3 we may dwell. And he answered, Go ye. And one said,
Be content, I pray thee, and go with thy servants. And he
4 answered, I will go. So he went with them. And when
5 they came to Jordan, they cut down wood. But as one
was felling a beam, the axe head fell into the water: and he
6 cried, and said, Alas, master, for it *was* borrowed. And the
man of God said, Where fell it? And he shewed him the
place. And he cut down a stick, and cast *it* in thither; and
7 the iron did swim. Therefore said he, Take *it* up to thee.
And he put out his hand, and took it.

3. *go with thy servants*] It seems as though they contemplated a removal all at once. In Eastern countries little is thought of camping out in the open country; and this the society were prepared to do while their humble shelter was in preparation. Elisha's presence would give countenance and encouragement to the workers.

4. *when they came to Jordan*] From what follows we see that they went close to the river. Probably the timber would be best grown at the water's edge.

5. *a beam*] The Hebrew noun has the article, the force of which may be '*his* beam', that one to which he was specially devoting himself.

the axe head] Literally 'the iron'. The word is the same as in verse 6. But the iron part of the hatchet is the head.

it was *borrowed*] When the whole society were to turn wood-cutters, it was not likely that axes would be in readiness for every one. This man had borrowed his, and was, as a good man would be, more troubled about its loss than if it had been his own.

6. *He cut down a stick, and cast* it *in thither*] The account is extremely simple, and does not at all fit with the explanations of those who would represent Elisha as holding the stick and when he had put it into the hole for the handle, thus raising the iron from the bottom. The stick is cast on the surface of the water.

and the iron did swim] R.V. **and made the iron to swim.** The voice of the Hebrew verb requires the rendering of R.V. The stick cast into the river was the outward symbol which the prophet used, as a sign of what was to be miraculously brought to pass. The iron was to float as the piece of wood did. In the same manner the salt at Jericho, and the meal at Gilgal, were signs the one of the purity, the other of the wholesomeness, which was to be wrought in the bad water, and the noxious pottage.

7. *Therefore said he*] R.V. **And he said.** The conjunction is the simple copulative, and nothing more is needed in the English.

he put out his hand, and took it] Elisha here wrought, as on previous occasions, for the help of the sons of the prophets. Now however his power is exercised for an individual, while in the other cases recorded, it was for the benefit of the whole society. Critics have objected that there is no adequate reason for the exercise of supernatural power, but

Then the king of Syria warred against Israel, and took 8
counsel with his servants, saying, In such and such a place
shall be my camp. And the man of God sent unto the 9
king of Israel, saying, Beware that *thou* pass not such a
place; for thither the Syrians are come down. And the 10
king of Israel sent to the place which the man of God told
him and warned him of, and saved himself there, not once
nor twice. Therefore the heart of the king of Syria was 11
sore troubled for this thing; and he called his servants, and

the loser of the axe was sorely troubled ere he came to Elisha, as his cry 'Alas! master' shews. There was no chance of supplying what was lost except with some miles of journey, and perhaps poverty was an obstacle too. Beside which the whole community would be encouraged, when by this act Elisha made clear to them that they had God's blessing on their new undertaking.

8—23. ELISHA MAKES KNOWN THE KING OF SYRIA'S PLANS. THE SOLDIERS SENT AGAINST ELISHA ARE SMITTEN WITH BLINDNESS, AND HE LEADS THEM INTO SAMARIA. (Not in Chronicles.)

8. *Then* [R.V. **Now**] *the king of Syria warred against Israel*] Whether this was before the cure of Naaman or after we have no indication. It is clear however that Syria was a most formidable adversary to Israel at this period. The inroads described first in this chapter appear to have been made by bands of plunderers, of course with the knowledge and under the direction of the king. But when Benhadad (see verse 24), who probably was the king here alluded to, gathered all his host and came and besieged Samaria the warfare was of a different kind. Josephus calls the Syrian king 'Adad'.

9. *And the man of God sent unto the king of Israel*] As against Syria, the power of Elisha would be most naturally exerted in favour of Israel. In spite of the strong language used against Jehoram (iii. 13, 14) and his family on account of their sins, God's prophet had still much hope of the nation, and as we have seen in several instances, not without good reason. His action here saves not only the king, but the people also.

are come [R.V. **coming**] *down*] They were lying or intending to lie in ambush ready to spring upon and capture any that came in their way. Josephus says the king of Israel was starting on a hunting party when Elisha warned him.

10. *sent to the place*] A single messenger, against whom the Syrians would do nothing, would be enough to find out whether the prophet's warning were true.

not once nor twice] i. e. but several times.

11. *Therefore* [R.V. **And**] *the heart of the king of Syria was sore troubled*] Because he saw on all these occasions that the opportunity he had looked for was taken away. He appears to have been acting on information which told him of expected movements of the forces of

said unto them, Will ye not shew me which of us *is* for the
12 king of Israel? And one of his servants said, None, my
lord, O king: but Elisha, the prophet that *is* in Israel,
telleth the king of Israel the words that thou speakest
13 in thy bedchamber. And he said, Go and spy where he *is*,
that I may send and fetch him. And it was told him,
14 saying, Behold, *he is* in Dothan. Therefore sent he thither
horses, and chariots, and a great host: and they came by
15 night, and compassed the city about. And when the
servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth,
behold, a host compassed the city both with horses and

Israel. When his design was frustrated over and over again it was natural to think of treachery among his own people.

12. *Elisha, the prophet that* is *in Israel*] This mention of Elisha points to such a knowledge of him as might have been gained through Naaman's cure. It may however be that communications of other kinds passed between Syria and Israel, and that in some of these the precise nature of Elisha's conduct was described. Nothing in the story of Naaman could suggest that Elisha gave information to the king of Israel.

13. *go and spy*] R.V. **see.** The original is the ordinary verb rendered 'see' in other places.

that I may send and fetch him] And thus put an end to the source of information enjoyed by the king of Israel.

Dothan] Only mentioned in the canonical books of the O.T. here and in the history of Joseph (Gen. xxxvii. 17). In the book of Judith (iv. 6; vii. 3, 18; viii. 3) it occurs in the account of Holofernes' campaign against Bethulia. It was not far from Shechem. It appears from this narrative that Elisha had a residence there. According to Jerome the place was twelve Roman miles north of Samaria. We can see from this history that the Syrians were able at this time to penetrate very far into the country of Israel.

14. *a great host*] Greatness is comparative. Here was a company such as could be led by Elisha to Samaria, and fed easily when they reached that city. But no doubt they were formidable when employed for the capture of a single man of peace like Elisha, and they had taken up their position by night.

compassed the city about] i.e. beset all the gates, so that none could escape without their knowledge.

15. *the servant*] The word is the same which in iv. 43 was rendered 'servitor'. It is the special and more personal servant. Hence the R.V. puts 'or, minister' in the margin.

a host compassed the city both with horses and chariots] R.V. **an host with horses and chariots was round about the city.** The words are not the same in Hebrew as in the previous verse where 'compassed' was used. Literally 'an host and horses &c.' The horses and chariots were in addition to the footmen, who alone were spoken of in verse 14.

chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master, how shall we do? And he answered, Fear not: for *they* 16
that *be* with us *are* moe than *they* that *be* with them. And 17
Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and behold, the mountain was full *of* horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha. And 18
when they came down to him, Elisha prayed unto the LORD, and said, Smite this people, I pray thee, with blindness.

16. they *that* be *with us*] Elisha speaks as a man whose eyes are opened, and who in consequence is sure of Jehovah's protection, whether he beholds the angelic host about him or not.

17. *open his eyes*] To the servant there was need of a more manifest vision, and for this Elisha prays, and God vouchsafes to grant it, that the servant may become as confident as his master. It is not that the troops may be gathered that Elisha prays, they are there already, but that the servant may have a seeing eye bestowed upon him to discern how well he and his master are protected.

the mountain was full of *horses and chariots of fire*] Just as in chapter ii. 11 we read of appearances so described. It is not necessary that we suppose the vision to have been of literal horses and chariots. The heavenly host was seen encamped about God's servant in such wise as to disperse all fear.

round about Elisha] The enemy compassed the town all round, but there was an inner circle filled by God's army. Dothan stood on an eminence and so the summit could thus be encircled, and the barrier against the Syrians appear complete.

18. *And when they came down to him*] As the words stand, 'they' must refer to the Syrian troops, and to understand the sentence we must suppose that Elisha and his servant, the latter encouraged by the heavenly vision, had come forth from the city and been able to pass the gate. After this the Syrians followed them, and on their approach Elisha prayed that they might be smitten with blindness. Some have however thought that 'to him' is an error for 'to them', and have referred the verb to Elisha and his servant. Thus the sense would be: 'When Elisha and his servant came down to the enemy, as they were emboldened to do, then Elisha prayed &c.' But there is no such great difficulty in understanding the existing text, as to warrant us in accepting a conjecture which seems only supported by one, the Syriac, version. It was quite in the character of Elisha to go forth with his now courageous servant, and the Syrians at first would let them pass out so far that they might be surrounded directly by the waiting troops.

Smite this people, I pray thee, with blindness] What seems to have been sent upon the men was an illusion which prevented them from seeing correctly what was before them. Josephus explains it as a mist (ἀχλὺς) whereby they were prevented from recognising Elisha. The

And he smote them with blindness according to the word
19 of Elisha. And Elisha said unto them, This *is* not the way,
neither *is* this the city: follow me, and I will bring you
to the man whom ye seek. But he led them to Samaria.
20 And it came to pass, when they were come *into* Samaria,
that Elisha said, LORD, open the eyes of these *men*, that
they may see. And the LORD opened their eyes, and they
21 saw; and behold, *they were* in the midst of Samaria. And
the king of Israel said unto Elisha, when he saw them, My
22 father, shall I smite *them?* shall I smite *them?* And he

word, which is plural in form, occurs only here and in Gen. xix. 11. It denotes the seeing of something unreal instead of the true image. Thus these men could go with Elisha to Samaria, not knowing to what place he was leading them.

19. *This* is *not the way, neither* is *this the city*] i.e. the way to Elisha, and the city where you shall find him.

I will bring you to the man whom ye seek] But you shall find him in a place where you shall not be able to arrest him. Thus does Elisha use the glamour, or hallucination, under which these men were cast, to secure his own safety.

But [R.V. **and**] *he led them to Samaria*] That there he might make himself known unto them; and they, still under the influence which had been supernaturally cast over them, followed him without alarm till they were within the walls of the strongly fortified royal city.

20. *open the eyes of these men*] i.e. give them again the true perception of what is round about them. The prayer has been twice used by Elisha in this narrative, but for two different kinds of illumination. His servant was enabled to look beyond material surroundings and to recognise that there is a spiritual world in close proximity to the natural, that God and His ministers are not far from every one of us. To these Syrian soldiers natural sight was restored, after their eyes had been for a time holden (cf. Luke xxiv. 16) that they might be brought into the power of the king of Israel. God has brought the enemy of His prophet into a snare.

behold, they were *in the midst of Samaria*] Apparently, as Josephus says, brought where the king of Israel, with his troops, might fall upon them, and slay them, had it been permitted. At once they would see that they were prisoners, instead of making a prisoner; and their minds would be as full of the expectation of death, as Jehoram's was of eagerness to kill them.

21. *My father*] The form of address is strange from the mouth of the king even though he be described (iii. 2) as better than his father and his mother. It is however one more token of the great influence exercised in Israel by the prophets Elijah and Elisha. In the present instance Jehoram could hardly undertake to smite the prisoners brought into his hands by the prophet without Elisha's consent, though his

answered, Thou shalt not smite *them:* wouldest thou smite *those* whom thou hast taken captive with thy sword and with thy bow? set bread and water before them, that they may eat and drink, and go to their master. And he 23
prepared great provision for them: and when they had eaten and drunk, he sent them away, and they went to their master. So the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel.

And it came to pass after this, that Ben-hadad king of 24

repeated question 'Shall I smite them? Shall I smite them?' shews how eager he was to destroy them.

22. *wouldest thou smite* those *whom thou hast taken captive*] The prophet points out that the men are not even captives whom the king himself has taken. Had they been so, yet the laws of war would have forbidden their slaughter at such a time and in cold blood. Much more is it unlawful to slay these, who are God's prisoners. Some have preferred to take the sentence as not interrogative. 'Those whom thou hadst taken prisoners thou mightest be allowed to slay, but not these.' Deut. xx. 13 sanctions the slaying prisoners of war; but it is doubtful whether the grammar of the original in this verse can be taken as anything but interrogative.

set bread and water before them] It is manifest that the prophet was setting forth a higher degree of humanity than was usual towards prisoners. We need not therefore be surprised, if in the former clause of the verse he does not speak according to the sterner precept of Deuteronomy, which was laid down in order that the idolaters might be exterminated from Canaan.

23. *he prepared great provision for them*] We can see from the use of the phrase 'bread and water' in other passages that the words embrace all kinds of food, and hence that Elisha's injunction was equivalent to saying 'Feed them well, and let them go'. Cf. for the phrase Deut. xxiii. 4; 1 Kings xviii. 4 and 1 Sam. xxv. 11. In the last passage the extent of meaning in the words may be estimated by the gifts which, in verse 18, Abigail takes to David and his men.

the bands of Syria] i.e. these marauding parties, protected by the king of Syria's authority.

came no more] The generous treatment had its effect. Josephus (*Ant.* IX. 44) says 'King Adad was wonderstruck at the strange occurrence, as well as the manifestation and the power of the God of the Israelites, and at the prophet in whom the divine spirit was so manifestly present, hence he determined through fear of Elisha no longer to attack the king of Israel secretly, but decided to make open war'.

24—31. BENHADAD BESIEGES SAMARIA. THE CITY SUFFERS TERRIBLY FROM FAMINE, AND THE KING THREATENS TO PUT ELISHA TO DEATH. (Not in Chronicles.)

24. *Ben-hadad*] Probably the same king who was defeated and submitted himself to Ahab (1 Kings xx.).

Syria gathered all his host, and went up, and besieged
25 Samaria. And there was a great famine in Samaria: and
behold, they besieged it, until an ass's head was *sold* for
fourscore *pieces* of silver, and the fourth part of a kab
26 of dove's dung for five *pieces* of silver. And as the king of
Israel was passing by upon the wall, there cried a woman
27 unto him, saying, Help, my lord, O king. And he said,
If the LORD do not help thee, whence shall I help thee?

went up, and besieged Samaria] Josephus explains that Jehoram did not feel himself a match for Benhadad, and so shut himself up in Samaria, relying for protection on the security of its walls.

25. *a great famine in Samaria*] The walls were protection enough, but the enemy lay outside, and the provisions came to an end.

an ass's head] This would not, except in dire extremity, be taken for food, but they were in such straits in Samaria that 80 shekels of silver were now given for it.

a kab] So R.V. The measure is not mentioned elsewhere, but is said to have been the sixth part of a *seah*, which is more frequently spoken of. The kab probably contained about two quarts.

dove's dung] Supposed by some to be the name of a very worthless kind of pulse, which in ordinary times nobody dreamt of eating, but of which now a small quantity fetched a large price. That excrement has been used for food in times of famine we have examples (Joseph. *B. J.* v. 13. 7), but that dove's dung should have been specially gathered for this purpose would be very strange. There could be but so small a supply. It appears better therefore to take the words as the name of some vegetable. The Germans call 'assafœtida' *Teufelsdreck*=devil's dung. Josephus says, without any warrant, that this 'dove's dung was bought by the people instead of salt'.

26. *the king of Israel was passing by upon the wall*] Making the necessary rounds to see that the watch was kept up, and everything done that could be done for the security of the city. Josephus says he was afraid lest some one should let in the enemy. The wall must have been furnished with a breast-work so that the inhabitants could pass along without being in much danger, and it would be open on the inner side. Hence any one within could see and speak to those who were passing along, as this woman did. In some cases dwelling-houses were built into the wall, and must have had a passage through them.

27. If *the Lord do not help thee*] There is some difficulty here. The word rendered 'if.....not' is that which in Hebrew is generally put with an imperative='Let not'. So that the sense would be 'May the Lord not help thee'. So the LXX. But such a wish could hardly have come at such a time into the king's mind. The R.V. (marg.) attempts to keep the imperative force thus, 'Nay, let the Lord help thee'. This comes a little nearer the sense of the English versions. But there is no warrant for separating the negative particle in this way from its verb.

out of the barnfloor, or out of the winepress? And the 28
king said unto her, What aileth thee? And she answered,
This woman said unto me, Give thy son, that we may eat
him to day, and we will eat my son to morrow. So we 29
boiled my son, and did eat him: and I said unto her on the
next day, Give thy son, that we may eat him: and she hath
hid her son. And it came to pass, when the king heard 30
the words of the woman, that he rent his clothes; and he
passed by upon the wall, and the people looked, and
behold, *he had* sackcloth within upon his flesh. Then he 31
said, God do so and more also to me, if the head of Elisha
the son of Shaphat shall stand on him *this* day.

Perhaps it is best to explain the negative particle, as if the verb belonging to it were suppressed. Thus 'Do not (cry to me); the Lord must help thee; for I cannot'. In this way the sense given in the English versions would be the correct force of the words.

out of the barnfloor, or out of the winepress?] i.e. with anything to eat or to drink. The supply of both was utterly spent, as the whole city knew. For the expression cf. Hos. ix. 2.

28. *What aileth thee?*] The woman's cry is not stopped by his answer. She has more to speak about than to ask him for food.

This woman said unto me] It would appear as if she had brought her neighbour along with her, that what she deemed justice might be done her at once. That they should be brought to such hardships and horrors as are here described had been foretold to Israel in early times (Lev. xxvi. 29; Deut. xxviii. 53—57); cf. also Lament. ii. 20; iv. 10; Ezek. v. 10. Josephus relates the like dreadful sufferings in the siege of Jerusalem by Titus (*B. J.* VI. 3. 4).

my son] According to the history the children were both sons. Josephus represents only one of them as a boy.

29. *she hath hid her son*] So hath famine changed the nature of those whom Jeremiah calls 'the pitiful women'. The king cannot answer such an appeal, though starvation have made the mother feel that it is a just one.

30. *and he passed by upon the wall*] The R.V. places these words in a parenthesis rendering (Now he was passing by upon the wall).

the people looked] At such an appeal many would congregate beside the two persons concerned in the matter.

he had *sackcloth within upon his flesh*] Cf. the action of his father Ahab (1 Kings xxi. 27) when God threatened him with punishment after the murder of Naboth. But neither in one case nor the other does the sorrow appear to have worked any good result. 'I find his sorrow, I find not his repentance. The worst man may grieve for his smart, only the good heart grieves for his offence' (Bp Hall). The result of Jehoram's anguish seems to have been only rage against Elisha.

31. *if the head of Elisha.....shall stand on him* this *day*] We must

32 But Elisha sat in his house, and the elders sat with him; and *the king* sent a man from before him: but ere the messenger came to him, he said to the elders, See ye how this son of a murderer hath sent to take away mine head? look, when the messenger cometh, shut the door, and hold him fast at the door: *is* not the sound of his master's feet
33 behind him? And while he yet talked with them, behold,

suppose that Elisha had not been wanting in admonitions to both king and people during this terrible siege, and the anger of Jehoram was great because the prophet, who had wrought so mightily in the war with Moab, and on many another occasion which the king would know of, had done nothing to save the nation in this great calamity. This is the explanation of Josephus (*Ant.* IX. 4. 4) and the feeling is what was to be expected in a son of Jezebel.

CHS. VI. 32—VII. 2. A MESSENGER IS SENT TO PUT ELISHA TO DEATH. ELISHA FORETELLS A SUDDEN PLENTY IN SAMARIA. (Not in Chronicles.)

32. *But Elisha sat in his house*] His counsels had been productive of little result, but he is less disturbed than others, having a ground for his trust which they had not found.

and the elders sat with him] These must be understood to be the chief men of the city, who had come for his advice, having no other helper to flee unto.

and the king *sent a man*] One of those who were in waiting to obey his orders and who had heard his threat against Elisha.

he said to the elders] i.e. Elisha, divinely forwarned of the impending danger, explains to his companions what the king's design against him was.

this son of a murderer] 'Still is Naboth's blood laid in Jehoram's dish' (Bp Hall). The prophet speaks as though the messenger were already in sight, so vivid is his own spiritual consciousness of what the king has set afoot.

hold him fast at the door] R.V. **hold the door fast against him.** The literal rendering is given on the margin of R.V., 'Thrust him back with the door'. The doors in Oriental houses mostly opened outwards, so that if pushed from within they would come against any one that stood on the outside, and drive him backwards. Beside knowing of the king's threat, Elisha seems to have been aware that he had almost immediately changed his purpose, and was hurrying after the messenger to prevent his order from being executed. Hence he explains to the elders that the king's footsteps are to be heard close upon those of his servant. When they supposed, as they would from the fulfilment of the first part of his words, that Elisha knew exactly what was coming, they would be ready, although they were Jehoram's servants, to stop the messenger so long as to see whether the king did really arrive. That the king did come we learn from vii. 17.

the messenger came down unto him: and he said, Behold, this evil *is* of the LORD; what should I wait for the LORD any longer? Then Elisha said, Hear ye the word of the 7
LORD; Thus saith the LORD, To morrow about *this* time *shall* a measure of fine flour *be sold* for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, in the gate of Samaria. Then a lord on whose hand the king leaned answered the 2
man of God, and said, Behold, *if* the LORD would make

33. *while he yet talked with them*] He had hardly explained his knowledge and his wish before action became necessary. The messenger arrived, and we must understand that the king also arrived immediately afterwards, and so the execution of Elisha was stayed, and Jehoram was shewn to be in some degree penitent for his hasty threat.

and he said] The words which follow must be the words of the king. He has reached Elisha's house and countermanded his first order. Now his thought is of what shall be done next. The people are at the direst extremity, and God, who has allowed this evil to come upon the nation, gives His prophet no message of relief. In this conviction he is of the mind that Samaria shall be surrendered. Hence his language, 'This evil is of the Lord' and He allows it to continue, 'why should I wait for the Lord any longer?'

CH. VII. **1.** *Hear ye the word of the Lord*] Having seen the change in the king's disposition, even though it were a change to despondency, rather than trust, Elisha in the name of the Lord gives a solemn assurance that help is nigh. This he does in the presence of the elders who had been sitting with him, and of those persons who had come in the king's retinue.

a measure of fine flour be sold *for a shekel*] The measure is the Hebrew *seah*, which is said to be about 1½ pecks. It was six times as much as the *Kab* mentioned in vi. 25. So that the change which Elisha foretells would provide 24 times as much good food for one-fifth of the price for which, in the famine, the vilest had been sold.

in the gate of Samaria] Where people congregated for markets and other purposes.

2. *Then a lord*] R.V. **the captain.** This is the usual rendering except in this narrative. The same change is made by R.V. in verses 17 and 19. The word is originally the title of some military officer. Hence the greater fitness of 'captain'.

on whose hand the king leaned] For the expression cf. v. 18, where Naaman describes himself as attending in this capacity. By taking the hand of any one as they walked by their side royal persons shewed their friendship and confidence.

Behold, if *the Lord would* [R.V. **should**] *make windows in heaven*] There is no mark of the hypothesis in the Hebrew, as is shewn by the italic 'if' of A.V. But the sense is hypothetical. Literally the words are 'Behold the Lord [is] making &c.' This is said in derision. Almost as if the captain had said, 'I suppose then the Lord is going to make

windows in heaven, might this thing be? And he said, Behold, thou shalt see *it* with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof.

3 And there were four leprous men *at* the entering in of the gate: and they said one to another, Why sit we here
4 until we die? If we say, We will enter *into* the city, then the famine *is* in the city, and we shall die there: and if we sit still here, we die also. Now therefore come, and let us fall unto the host of the Syrians: if they save us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall
5 but die. And they rose up in the twilight, to go unto the camp of the Syrians: and when they were come to the uttermost part of the camp of Syria, behold, *there*

&c.' and then he follows his scorn with a question. 'Even then, could [R.V. **might**] this thing be?' For 'windows of heaven' cf. Gen. vii. 11.

thou shalt see it *with thine eyes*] The answer to this mocking captain would be as hard for him to comprehend as was the promise of abundance which he was deriding. He, a person in close attendance on the king, to see the store which was promised and not partake of it was inconceivable. Doubtless his mockery grew louder still.

3—11. FOUR LEPERS DISCOVER THAT THE SYRIAN CAMP IS DESERTED, AND BRING WORD UNTO THE CITY. (Not in Chronicles.)

3. at *the entering in of the gate*] Lepers were not allowed to come into the city even in the time of war. On this regulation concerning them see Lev. xiii. 46; Num. v. 2—3.

until we die] As long as there had been enough, these lepers had their supply from friends in the city, but that had now come to an end. In such a dreadful famine the needs of the outcast lepers could be little regarded.

4. *let us fall unto the host of the Syrians*] These wrecks of humanity use the language which would be used by hale men who were *deserting* one side for another. Cf. 1 Sam. xxix. 3; 2 Kings xxv. 11. The expression 'fall away' for 'desert' is common in English also. Cf. Shaks. *Antony and Cleopatra*, IV. 6. 17, 'Canidius and the rest that *fell away*'.

we shall but die] Josephus makes them say they will be well rid of their lives, εὐθανατήσοντες.

5. *in the twilight*] This must be evening twilight. For in verse 9 they blame themselves for tarrying until morning light, and it was in the night (verse 12) that Jehoram was roused by the news that the Syrian camp was vacated.

to the uttermost [R.V. **outermost**] *part of the camp of Syria*] R.V. **the Syrians.** The portion meant is that which was nearest to them, but 'uttermost' has lost that sense now, and would be taken to signify the 'farthest portion'. Hence the change here and in verse 8. The Hebrew word for Syria is *Aram*, which is used alike for the country

was no man there. For the Lord had made the host of the 6
Syrians to hear a noise of chariots, and a noise of horses,
even the noise of a great host: and they said one to
another, Lo, the king of Israel hath hired against us the
kings of the Hittites, and the kings of the Egyptians, to

and the people; and since it is rendered 'Syrians' in the first clause of this verse, and in other places of the chapter, there is no need why it should be otherwise translated here.

6. *For the Lord had made the host of the Syrians to hear a noise*] As the eyes of the Syrians who came to seize Elisha were deluded, and deceived, so here the other sense is made to err. We need not enquire how it was brought about, for we are not told, nor intended to know. The report of what had alarmed the host would come to the knowledge of the Israelites in time, and they could only say, 'It is the Lord's doing, and is marvellous in our eyes'.

hath hired against us] Instances of such mercenary service are found elsewhere in the Bible narrative. Thus (2 Sam. x. 6) 'the children of Ammon sent and *hired* the Syrians of Beth-rehob &c.' And Amaziah, king of Judah, *hired* valiant men out of Israel (2 Chron. xxv. 6).

the kings of the Hittites] In the Bible we first meet with the Hittites as one among several nations whose land God promised to Abraham and his seed (Gen. xv. 20). Next they are mentioned as dwelling near Hebron (Gen. xxiii. 4), and from them Abraham buys a burial-place for Sarah, which is afterwards spoken of (Gen. xxv. 9) as in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar *the Hittite*. Two of Esau's wives were of this people (Gen. xxvi. 34), and their name occurs several times in the story of the captivity, among the people whose land Israel was to go up and possess (Exod. iii. 8, 17; xiii. 5 &c.). In Numb. xiii. 29 the spies when they came back mentioned the Hittites as some of the dwellers in the country, and in Josh. i. 4, the whole country which the people were to go in and possess is described as 'from the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites'. The Hittites are among the enemy whom Israel overcame at the taking of Jericho (Josh. xxiv. 11), and they are part of the host conquered at the waters of Merom (Josh. xi. 4). Some of them continued to dwell in the land in the days of the Judges (Judges iii. 5) and intermingled with the children of Israel. Uriah the Hittite was among David's captains (2 Sam. xxiii. 39), and Hittite women were among the wives of Solomon (1 Kings xi. 1). For the kings of the Hittites, Solomon (1 Kings x. 29) brought horses out of Egypt, and in the present chapter we have the same kings represented as a cause of great alarm to the Syrian host around Samaria. Yet in profane literature this people, evidently very wide-extended and powerful, are unmentioned, and it is only the modern deciphering of the records of Egypt and Babylon which has given us a conception of the Hittite power. Thence we learn that from very early times they were in conflict with Egypt, and that one of their chief towns, Kadesh on the river Orontes, was the scene of several contests between the Hittites and the Egyptians. Their other

7 come upon us. Wherefore they arose and fled in the twilight, and left their tents, and their horses, and their asses, *even* the camp as it *was*, and fled for their life.
8 And when these lepers came to the uttermost part of the camp, they went into one tent, and did eat and drink, and carried thence silver, and gold, and raiment, and went and hid *it;* and came again, and entered into another tent,
9 and carried thence *also*, and went and hid *it*. Then they said one to another, We do not well: this day *is* a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace: if we tarry till the morning light, *some* mischief will come upon us: now therefore come,
10 that we may go and tell the king's household. So they came

chief city is found to have been Carchemish on the Euphrates, so that the description of their territory in Josh. i. 4 is seen to be utterly correct, and we can understand how the hiring of such a mighty enemy would be sure to alarm Benhadad. For particulars of the inscriptions which relate to the Hittites see *Records of the Past* I. 161; II. 61; V. 6, &c. and Dr Wright's *Empire of the Hittites*.

and the kings of the Egyptians] Large districts of Egypt, called by Greeks, Nomes, were under distinct organization though owning allegiance to the Pharaoh. It is very probable that at various periods there were two if not three kingdoms in the land. Hence the Assyrians speak of the *kings* that had been hired out of Egypt. If this had been the case then Ben-hadad and his army would have been shut in both on the north and on the south. We need not wonder at the terror such a thought inspired. The plural 'kings' of the Egyptians may perhaps here be used vaguely, as 'princes' of Babylon is in 2 Chron. xxxii. 31, when only Berodach-baladan is in question.

8. *they went into one tent, and did eat and drink*] Hunger asserted the first claim; that satisfied, they began to think how they might make most gain for themselves, by hiding a store of the deserted wealth; and this they did till their consciences smote them for their selfishness.

9. *We do not well*] Although by the law of Moses these lepers were excluded from the city, they yet had in their degree the duties of citizens to perform, and in neglecting to give tidings of the Syrian flight, they were not acting the citizen's part.

some *mischief will come upon us*] R.V. **punishment will overtake us.** On the margin of R.V. is 'our iniquity will find us out'. The noun is the same which in Gen. iv. 13 is rendered in A.V. in the text by 'punishment' and on the margin by 'iniquity'. The idea of penalty is, and ought to be, closely bound up with the thought of wrong-doing. It could hardly fail to be found out in the morning at what time the lepers had made their discovery, and when it became known they would surely be punished for not giving immediate information.

the king's household] The men themselves would go no further than the gate, but the warders on the wall would carry the news, as soon as

and called unto the porter of the city: and they told them, saying, We came to the camp of the Syrians, and behold, *there was* no man there, neither voice of man, but horses tied, and asses tied, and the tents as they *were*. And he called 11
the porters; and they told *it to* the king's house within.

And the king arose in the night, and said unto his 12
servants, I will now shew you what the Syrians have done to us. They know that we *be* hungry; therefore are they gone out of the camp to hide themselves in the field, saying, When they come out of the city, we shall catch them alive, and get into the city. And one of his servants 13

they received it, to the royal palace. The king's distress at the sufferings of the besieged citizens would be known to every one.

10. *called unto the porter*] i.e. from the outside of the wall, whither alone they were allowed to come. The singular noun is clearly taken in a collective sense, and some of the versions give 'porters'. The plural pronoun immediately following shews that this is intended. Hence R.V. gives the plural on the margin.

but horses [R.V. **the horses**] *tied, and asses* [R.V. **the asses**] *tied*] The articles are expressed in the original, and the strict rendering gives a truer idea of all things being left without distinction. The baggage cattle, and the beasts for riding stood tethered in their places, fear having permitted no attempt to unloose them. In the camp it was necessary to keep the animals tied up, and most likely one part of the encampment was set apart for this purpose, and the terrified soldiers fled without a thought of going first to get their horses.

the tents as they were] The italic word is really implied, and so is printed in Roman type in R.V. Everything had been forsaken just as it stood. The alarm had proved so sudden and so terrible that the one thought had been to get away.

11. *And he called*] i.e. the one who was nearest and received the news did so. The singular corresponds to the singular 'porter' in verse 10. But there is a various reading here in the Hebrew, which the R.V. places on the margin, 'the porters called'.

and they told it to *the king's house* [R.V. **household**] *within*] The R.V. renders as in verse 9. We are to understand that one of the number of the watchmen was detached to convey the news. They would not all leave their posts.

12—16. THE REPORT OF THE SYRIAN FLIGHT FOUND TO BE TRUE. THE CONSEQUENT PLENTY IN SAMARIA. (Not in Chronicles.)

12. *the king arose in the night*] The news was so important that though it was night-time, the messengers went with it to the king's bedchamber, and he, though probably thinking the report much too good to be true, at once arose to take measures for investigating it.

what the Syrians have done to us] i.e. with the hope of entrapping us.

answered and said, Let *some* take, I pray thee, five of the horses that remain, which are left in the city, (behold, they *are* as all the multitude of Israel that are left in it: behold, *I say*, they *are even* as all the multitude of the Israelites
14 that are consumed:) and let us send and see. They took therefore two chariot horses; and the king sent after the
15 host of the Syrians, saying, Go and see. And they went after them unto Jordan: and lo, all the way *was* full *of* garments and vessels, which the Syrians had cast away in their haste. And the messengers returned, and told the
16 king. And the people went out, and spoiled the tents of the Syrians. So a measure of fine flour was *sold* for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, according to the word of the LORD.

13. *five of the horses*] 'Five' is probably used indefinitely to mean some small number. That 'five' may be thus used seems likely from Gen. xliii. 34; Num. xi. 19.

behold, they are *as all the multitude*] The sense of the speaker seems to be: the men sent out as spies, if they be taken and slain, will be no worse off than those that remain behind, for these are consumed with famine and will soon be dead. And if they find the news true they are enough to make sure of the matter, and to bring word into the city.

14. *two chariot horses*] R.V. **two chariots with horses.** Each chariot had its pair of horses, so that there were four horses, and probably two or three people in each chariot. If anything happened to one chariot, the other might come to the rescue, or, at all events, have a chance of escaping to the city.

after the host of the Syrians] The spies were not content with searching the camp. For the king's misgivings had no doubt communicated themselves to the messengers. So they went on the way where scattered property of all kinds shewed that the Syrians had taken their flight.

15. *unto Jordan*] When the heaven-sent noise caused the Syrians to imagine that the Hittites from the north and the Egyptians from the south were upon them, the only safe road would be to make for the Jordan eastward and, after crossing it, to conceal themselves in the mountains on the other side.

the messengers returned] After the Jordan had been reached there could be no more doubt, there was now no fear of an enemy in ambush.

16. *the people went out*] When the camp had been found empty, word was at once sent back into Samaria, while a portion of the exploring party advanced on the road to the Jordan. The whole population were encouraged by the news, and went out, as they were likely to do after being so long pent up, in full numbers. There was food to be had, and beside that, rich plunder.

according to the word of the Lord] See above in verse 1 where Elisha describes the announcement he makes as 'the word of the Lord'.

And the king appointed the lord on whose hand he 17
leaned to have the charge of the gate: and the people
trode upon him in the gate, and he died, as the man
of God had said, who spake when the king came down
to him. And it came to pass as the man of God had 18
spoken to the king, saying, Two measures of barley for
a shekel, and a measure of fine flour for a shekel, shall
be to morrow about *this* time in the gate of Samaria:
and *that* lord answered the man of God, and said, Now 19
behold, *if* the LORD should make windows in heaven,
might such a thing be? And he said, Behold, thou shalt
see *it* with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof. And so it 20
fell out unto him: for the people trode upon him in the
gate, and he died.

Then spake Elisha unto the woman, whose son he had 8

17—20. THE UNBELIEVING CAPTAIN IS TRODDEN TO DEATH IN THE GATE. (Not in Chronicles.)

17. *the king appointed the lord*] R.V. **captain.** For the change cf. verse 2. The captain was told off to restrain the impetuosity of the crowd, where crowding would be most dangerous.

as the man of God had said, who spake when the king came down to him] These words help us to understand the somewhat broken connexion of the language in verses 32 and 33 of the last chapter. Jehoram himself came down to Elisha's house after he had sent his messenger. Hence Elisha says 'Is not the sound of his master's feet behind him?' (the messenger). And we can then understand the question in the following verse, which is intelligible in the mouth of the king, but could hardly have been spoken by the messenger.

20. *the people trode upon him*] The excitement was no doubt intense. The crowd had been in the camp, had eaten and drunk abundantly, and were carrying home spoils, and probably thinking how soon they could return for another load. There would be but little consideration given to the captain at the gate. The excited mob had lost respect for greatness, and so he is borne down in the throng, and killed, having seen the plenty, but had no share of it.

CH. VIII. **1—6.** THE LAND OF THE SHUNAMMITE IS RESTORED TO HER BY THE KING'S ORDER FOR THE SAKE OF ELISHA'S MIRACLES. (Not in Chronicles.)

1. *Then spake Elisha*] R.V. **Now Elisha had spoken.** It is clear from verse 3 that Elisha's advice was given at least seven years before the event narrated in these verses. Hence the necessity for the change of tense. It is probable that the accounts of Elisha's work and influence are not related in their chronological order. The famine here

restored to life, saying, Arise, and go thou and thine household, and sojourn wheresoever thou canst sojourn: for the LORD hath called for a famine; and it shall also come
2 upon the land seven years. And the woman arose, and did after the saying of the man of God: and she went with her household, and sojourned in the land of the Philistines
3 seven years. And it came to pass at the seven years' end, that the woman returned out of the land of the Philistines: and she went forth to cry unto the king for
4 her house and for her land. And the king talked with

spoken of was most likely the same to which allusion is made in iv. 38, and perhaps the conference of the king with Gehazi mentioned in verse 4 took place before the latter was smitten with leprosy. It is not however absolutely certain that Jehoram might not have an interview with Gehazi, though leprous. Bp Hall says of them: 'I begin to think some goodness in both these. Had there not been some goodness in Jehoram, he had not taken pleasure to hear, even from a leprous mouth, the miraculous acts and praises of God's prophet: had there not been some goodness in Gehazi, he had not, after so fearful an infliction of judgement, thus ingenuously recounted the praises of his severe master'.

the woman, whose son he had restored] i.e. the Shunammite whose story is told in iv. 8—37.

sojourn wheresoever thou canst sojourn] Why such advice should be given to a woman, who from the history appears to have been in better circumstances than others, it is not easy to decide. As the husband is nowhere mentioned in this appeal to Jehoram, it may be that he, being already old when the son was restored to life, had in the meantime died. Then she may have fallen into some distress, and have been unable to dwell on the lands which her husband had cultivated.

the Lord hath called for a famine] Similarly the Lord is said *to call for* the sword against a land, Jer. xxv. 29; Ezek. xxxviii. 21.

and it shall also come] Elisha, as the seer, foretells the duration of the dearth, as he had done the termination of the siege, and the consequent abundance in Samaria (vii. 1). In both cases his words are directly referred to Jehovah.

2. *sojourned in the land of the Philistines*] As in Jacob's time, the patriarch with his family was sent into Egypt, an idolatrous land, because of the famine, so the pious Shunammite, for her life's support, goes forth among the Philistines, and stays there seven years.

3. *she went forth to cry unto the king*] She had reached Shunem, and found her land in other hands. It may be that some encroaching neighbour had entered on the untenanted property, or it may have been seized for the king as being deserted of its owner. In either case the king is the person to be appealed to, and to the court she makes her way.

4. *the king talked* [R.V. **was talking**] *with Gehazi*] For a brief

Gehazi the servant of the man of God, saying, Tell me, I pray thee, all the great *things* that Elisha hath done. And it came to pass, *as* he was telling the king how he had 5 restored a dead *body* to life, that behold, the woman, whose son he had restored to life, cried to the king for her house and for her land. And Gehazi said, My lord, O king, this *is* the woman, and this *is* her son, whom Elisha restored to life. And when the king asked the woman, she told him. 6 So the king appointed unto her a certain officer, saying, Restore all that *was* hers, and all the fruits of the field since the day that she left the land, even until now.

And Elisha came *to* Damascus; and Ben-hadad the king 7

conference we find Naaman coming to the court of Israel and probably obtaining an interview with the king or some of those in immediate attendance on him. So if Jehoram were desirous to know everything about Elisha, he might for a short time converse with Gehazi. The interview appears to have been in some public place, perhaps at the gate of the city, where kings sat to hear appeals and administer justice. The Shunammite finds them together. 'The words of Gehazi, the thoughts of the king, the desires of the Shunammite, all drawn together, by the wise providence of God into the centre of one moment, that His oppressed servant might receive a speedy justice' (Bp Hall).

5. *had restored a dead* body *to life*] R.V. **to life him that was dead.** This would be among the greatest of the great works of Elisha, and Jehoram's interest would consequently be at its height.

6. *she told him*] i.e. confirmed the narrative which Gehazi had given, and at the same time took advantage of the king's interest in Elisha, to press her plea for the restitution of her land.

Restore all that was *hers*] It would seem from this as if the king himself had been put in possession of the land. Hence he could order all the seven years' produce to be given back to her either in kind or in money from the royal stores.

7—15. ELISHA VISITS DAMASCUS. BENHADAD, BEING SICK, SENDS HAZAEL TO ENQUIRE OF ELISHA. BENHADAD IS MURDERED BY HAZAEL. (Not in Chronicles.)

7. *And Elisha came* to *Damascus*] Probably here 'Damascus' is used not for the city, but for the district. For Hazael (verse 9) has a journey to make to meet the prophet, and is sent from the royal city by the sick king with his enquiry. We need not suppose that Elisha went to fulfil the command which had been given to Elijah (1 Kings xix. 15) to anoint Hazael king over Syria. For he does not anoint him, but merely says 'The Lord hath shewed me that thou shalt be king over Syria'. Elisha appears to have been in no peril when he went into Syria, for the sick king's message is of the most peaceable kind, and the presents which Hazael brought with him are an indication of the honour in

of Syria was sick; and it was told him, saying, The man of
8 God is come hither. And the king said unto Hazael, Take
a present in thine hand, and go, meet the man of God,
and inquire of the LORD by him, saying, Shall I recover of
9 this disease? So Hazael went to meet him, and took a
present with him, even *of* every good thing of Damascus,
forty camels' burden, and came and stood before him, and
said, Thy son Ben-hadad king of Syria hath sent me to
10 thee, saying, Shall I recover of this disease? And Elisha

which the prophet was held. This may be accounted for by the cure of Naaman, and by the release of the Syrian soldiers whom the prophet had brought into Samaria (vi. 22, 23).

The man of God is come hither] Benhadad had experienced in many ways the power of the God of Israel, and though Rimmon was the god of Damascus, yet, in common with other idolaters, the king thinks that it may be possible for him, through the prophet, to obtain help from the Israelites' God. Josephus (*Ant.* IX. 4. 6) represents Benhadad as having sickened from despondency after his late flight from Samaria, and because the God of Israel was hostile to him.

8. *the king said unto Hazael*] Josephus says Hazael was the most trusted of Benhadad's household. He was evidently one of his chief ministers, and must have been in some prominent position at the time when God's message came to Elijah to anoint him as future king.

in thine hand] The Hebrew expression for 'with thee'. So in the next verse the literal 'in his hand' (see margin) is rendered 'with him'. The Oriental notion of sending a present is to make it seem as grand as possible, by committing each portion to a separate servant, or placing it on a separate beast of burden.

inquire of the Lord] It was not for information only that Benhadad sent, but with the hope that for such a gorgeous present the prophet might intercede with the God of Israel for his recovery.

9. *even* of *every good thing of Damascus*] Cf. the present which Jacob sent by his sons when they were going down into Egypt to buy food (Gen. xliii. 11), 'Take of the best fruits in the land in your vessels, and carry down the man a present &c.'

forty camels' burden] The number of camels was for display. We are not to suppose that each was fully laden. Nor need we think that Elisha who had refused Naaman's present would be more ready to accept Benhadad's.

stood before him] It must have been well known where Elisha was to be found. There was no concealment in his visit. An array of forty camels would only be brought to a definite spot.

Thy son Ben-hadad] The term indicates the humility of the petitioner. So Ahaz (2 Kings xvi. 7) when he sent for help to Tiglath-pileser, said 'I am thy servant and *thy son*'. In like manner Jehoram called Elisha 'my father', above in vi. 21.

said unto him, Go, say unto him, Thou mayest certainly recover: howbeit the LORD hath shewed me that he shall surely die. And he settled his countenance stedfastly, 11
until *he* was ashamed: and the man of God wept. And 12
Hazael said, Why weepeth my lord? And he answered, Because I know the evil that thou wilt do unto the children of Israel: their strong holds wilt thou set on fire, and their young *men* wilt thou slay with the sword, and wilt dash their children, and rip up their women with child. And 13

10. *Go, say unto him, Thou mayest certainly* [R.V. **shalt surely**] *recover*] This is not the translation of the Hebrew text (*Kethib*) but of the marginal reading [*Keri*]. The variation is between לֹא the negative and לוֹ the pronoun and preposition. The text would be rendered 'Go say; Thou shalt *not* recover'. This does not suit with what follows, 'Howbeit the Lord hath shewed me that he shall surely die'. We should expect 'For the Lord &c.' The meaning of the prophet's words is, 'Go and carry him such a message as a courtier is likely to carry, a message of good promise, for this I know you are likely to do, yet the Lord has made known to me that he will die'. The R.V. has given the translation of the *Kethib* on the margin, but as that is so little in harmony with the context, has translated the *Keri* in the text, though this is contrary to the usual rule of the Revisers.

Another way of explaining the language of Elisha has been adopted by some. It is pointed out that the king's question was 'Shall I recover of this disease?' Elisha, forewarned of the events that were coming, gives as answer to that enquiry 'Thou shalt surely recover', meaning thereby that the disease would not kill Benhadad, but suppresses that other source whence danger and death threatened, viz., the murderous hands of Hazael, which he knew would soon slay his master. This seems very unlike the manner of a prophet of the Lord. The explanation previously given is therefore to be preferred. Bp Hall takes the later explanation, 'The Lord hath shewed me that he shall surely die, by another means, though not by the disease'.

11. *And he settled his countenance stedfastly*] The R.V. adds 'upon him' in italics. This no doubt is the sense. Elisha fixed a stedfast gaze on the messenger. 'The seer of God descries more in Hazael than he could see in himself: he fixes his eyes therefore stedfastly in the Syrian's face, as one that in those lines read the bloody story of his life. Hazael blushes, Elisha weeps. The intention (i.e. the stedfast gaze) of those eyes did not so much amaze Hazael as the tears. As yet he was not guilty to himself of any wrong that might strain out this juice of sorrow' (Bp Hall).

until he *was ashamed*] i.e. until Hazael blushed with embarrassment at the searching look.

12. *and wilt dash their children*] R.V. and **wilt dash in pieces their little ones.** We have no details of Hazael's cruelty in the future, but

Hazael said, But what, *is* thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing? And Elisha answered, The LORD
14 hath shewed me *that* thou *shalt be* king over Syria. So he departed from Elisha, and came to his master; who said to him, What said Elisha to thee? And he answered, He
15 told me *that* thou shouldest surely recover. And it came to pass on the morrow, that he took a thick cloth, and dipt *it* in water, and spread *it* on his face, so that he died: and Hazael reigned in his stead.

hints of it are found. In x. 32 it is said 'Hazael smote them in all the coasts of Israel', and in xiii. 3 we read 'the Lord delivered Israel into the hand of Hazael', and in verse 22 of that chapter 'Hazael king of Syria oppressed Israel all the days of Jehoahaz'. The special instances of cruelty mentioned in this verse were those perpetrated among all the Eastern nations of Hazael's time, and examples are to be found in several places in Scripture. Cf. Is. xiii. 15, 16; Hosea x. 14; xiii. 16; Nahum iii. 10.

13. *And Hazael said, But what,* is *thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?*] R.V. **And Hazael said, But what is thy servant, which is but a dog, that he should do this great thing?** Hazael has felt the keenness of the prophet's glance, and finds that his thoughts are known, and his inmost designs laid bare. But still he keeps up a semblance of humility and calls himself a dog, a title of greatest contempt in the eyes of Orientals. Cf. for this use of the word 1 Sam. xxiv. 14; 2 Sam. ix. 8; xvi. 9.

14. *So* [R.V. **Then**] *he departed from Elisha*] The last words of the prophet had shewn him that his whole aim was clear in Elisha's sight, and his character thoroughly read. He had been treated as a man who would give a soft answer whatever the real message might be, and now he is sent away with the knowledge that the Lord sees all his policy. But he was a determined spirit, and the words of the prophet did not act as a check, but set him on a bolder course of villainy. He first acts the part that had been imputed to him, and with a lying tongue says 'He told me thou shouldest surely recover'. After that he cannot wait for time to bring about what God had said would be, but by a short road comes to the throne after smothering his master.

15. *on the morrow*] He would not tarry. The means he employed was probably the coverlet of the bed, which, soaked and laid over the sick man's face, would effectually stop his breath. The noun rendered 'thick cloth' [R.V. **the coverlet**] is only found here, but it is connected with a verb which signifies 'to weave'. Hence it was some woven stuff. 'Coverlet' is the rendering sanctioned by the LXX. which has *τὸ στρῶμα*. Death so caused would give very little sign of violence, and might in those early times be readily referred to the disease of which the king was sick. The Targum interprets the word of the mosquito-curtains round the bed, but these would be unsuitable for such

And in the fifth year of Joram the son of Ahab king of 16
Israel, Jehoshaphat *being* then king of Judah, Jehoram the
son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah *began* to reign. Thirty 17
and two years old was he when he *began* to reign; and he
reigned eight years in Jerusalem. And he walked in the 18
way of the kings of Israel, as did the house of Ahab: for
the daughter of Ahab was his wife: and he did evil in the
sight of the LORD. Yet the LORD would not destroy Judah 19
for David his servant's sake, as he promised him to give to

a purpose. Josephus explains it of some network (δίκτυον) with which he says Hazael strangled his master. This also is not the notion of the text.

16—24. JEHORAM, THE SON OF JEHOSHAPHAT KING OF JUDAH. HIS WARS WITH EDOM AND LIBNAH. (2 Chron. xxi. 1—20.)

16. *In the fifth year of Joram the son of Ahab*] On the difficulties connected with the chronology of this period, see above on i. 17. On the strength of the words in this verse 'Jehoshaphat being then king of Judah' it is supposed that Jehoram king of Judah was co-regent with his father. But, as is noted on the margin of R.V., some ancient authorities omit the sentence which makes father and son to be reigning together. The chief difficulty is introduced by the words of i. 17, which make Joram the son of Ahab commence his reign in the second year of Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat of Judah. That statement contradicts the present verse, and the explanation given on i. 17 though generally accepted gives rise to many questions. Especially it is objected that in no other instance is a son found reigning along with his father. Then Jehoshaphat was a vigorous monarch and zealous for the service of Jehovah, and was not likely to take as his coadjutor a prince of so weak a character, and of such different religious feeling as Jehoram. Still no more satisfactory solution has been suggested.

17. *when he* began *to reign*] The narrative of the Chronicler (2 Chron. xxi. 2—4) tells how at the commencement of his reign Jehoram slew his seven brothers as well as some of the princes of Israel. Thus he proved himself of a like character with Athaliah, whom he married.

18. *as did the house of Ahab*] Jehoshaphat's friendship and alliance with Ahab's house brought the ways of Israel into the kingdom of Judah.

the daughter of Ahab] i.e. Athaliah, who, after the death of Ahaziah (2 Kings xi. 1), slew all the seed royal of Judah, with the exception of Joash, Ahaziah's son, whom his aunt Jehosheba rescued.

19. *Yet* [R.V. **Howbeit**] *the Lord would not destroy*] The R.V. has adopted the rendering of Chronicles, where the original is the same as here.

as he promised him to give him alway a light, and *to his children*] R.V. **as he promised him to give unto him a lamp for his children**

20 him alway a light, *and* to his children. In his days Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah, and made a king
21 over themselves. So Joram went over to Zair, and all the chariots with him: and he rose by night, and smote the Edomites which compassed him about, and the captains of
22 the chariots: and the people fled into their tents. Yet Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah unto this day.

alway. The italic 'and' in A.V. shews that there is no conjunction in the Hebrew. Hence the change in R.V. But in 2 Chron. xxi. 7 the 'and' is expressed, and probably should be here. In 2 Sam. xxi. 17 David is called 'the lamp of Israel'. For the promise to David and his seed see 2 Sam. vii. 12—16, and for the expression 'to give him a lamp' see 1 Kings xi. 36, xv. 4, in which last passage the A.V. renders the noun 'lamp', which for consistency the R.V. has adopted in all the parallel places.

20. *Edom revolted*] In Solomon's time, Hadad (1 Kings xi. 14) recovered the kingdom of Edom, which had been overthrown by David (2 Sam. viii. 14). But by the time of Jehoshaphat the Edomites were again subject to Judah (1 Kings xxii. 47) and appear to have continued so until the time of the revolution here mentioned.

made a king over themselves] i.e. They deposed the deputy of Judah, and made one of their own royal family king, or chose a king of their own.

21. *So Joram went* [R.V. **Then Joram passed**] *over to Zair*] The name Zair is only found here. In the parallel passage of 2 Chronicles xxi. we find 'with his princes' instead of 'to Zair', and as there is some similarity of sound between the two Hebrew forms, it has been thought by some that there is a mistake in Kings from some misreading of the scribe. Others have suggested that 'Zair' is for 'Zoar', through which place troops marching from Judæa into Edom would have to pass. Others with much more probability have taken Zair (צָעִיר) to be a mis-writing for Seir (שֵׂעִיר), the name of the mountain ridge which extends southward from the Dead Sea through the desert. It is true 'Seir' is not named elsewhere by the writer of Kings, but there seems to be no occasion where he might be expected to mention it.

and he rose [R.V. inserts **up**] *by night and smote the Edomites which compassed him about*] Joram appears to have been surrounded by the Edomite forces, and for some time to have had the worst of the contest. It was only by a sudden sally in the night time that he forced his way out, and escaped. The captains of the Edomite chariots, mentioned here, most likely formed the outer circle of the enclosing force, and through them Joram passed last.

and the people fled into [R.V. **to**] *their tents*] 'The people' are the army of Joram, which after escaping from their encircling enemy made the best of their way home, feeling that Edom was too strong for them.

22. *Yet* [R.V. **so**] *Edom revolted*] The conjunction is changed to conform to the rendering in 2 Chronicles xxi. As the army of Joram was

Then Libnah revolted at the same time. And the rest of 23
the acts of Joram, and all that he did, *are* they not written
in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? And 24
Joram slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers
in the city of David: and Ahaziah his son reigned in his
stead.

In the twelfth year of Joram the son of Ahab king of 25
Israel did Ahaziah the son of Jehoram king of Judah *begin*
to reign. Two and twenty years old *was* Ahaziah when he 26

defeated, the Edomites secured their independence, and that continued till the date of the record from which the compiler of the Kings drew his information. So he copies faithfully 'unto this day'.

Then Libnah revolted] R.V. did Libnah revolt. The change is in conformity with Chronicles, because of the similarity of the Hebrew. Libnah was situate in the lowland between the mountains of Judah and the Mediterranean coast. It was a strong city with a king when the Israelites took it under Joshua (Josh. x. 29—39). It is mentioned afterwards (2 Kings xix. 8) as besieged by Sennacherib. The narrative of the Chronicler adds as the reason of the revolt 'because he [Joram] had forsaken the Lord the God of his fathers'. The revolt of Libnah does not seem to be connected in any way with that of Edom. The time was opportune and both Edomites and Libnites availed themselves of it.

23. *the rest of the acts of Joram*] In Chronicles we are told of the high places which he made in the mountains of Judah, and how he compelled the people to worship there. In consequence of this a writing is said to have come to him from Elijah the prophet rebuking him for his evil doing, and telling of the painful disease by which he should die. We read there also of revolts against Joram by the Philistines and the Arabians, and that by the latter all the king's family were cut off except his youngest son. Moreover that when he died the people made no burning for him, as had been done at the death of his ancestors, and that 'he departed without being desired', i.e. none missed him or lamented for him when he died. Also that though buried in the city of David, his body was not put into the sepulchres of the kings. This last statement is no contradiction of what is contained in verse 24 of this chapter.

25—29. Reign of Ahaziah king of Judah. His war against Hazael king of Syria. Joram king of Israel helps Ahaziah and is wounded. (2 Chronicles xxii. 1—6.)

25. *Joram...Jehoram*] To prevent confusion it will be convenient to adopt the orthography of this verse for these names, Joram king of Israel, and Jehoram king of Judah. They are but different forms of the same name, and given in the Bible narrative indiscriminately to each.

26. *Two and twenty years old* was *Ahaziah*] In 2 Chron xxii. 2 his

began to reign; and he reigned one year in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Athaliah, the daughter of Omri king
27 of Israel. And he walked in the way of the house of Ahab, and did evil in the sight of the LORD, as *did* the house of
28 Ahab: for he *was* the son in law of the house of Ahab. And he went with Joram the son of Ahab to the war against Hazael king of Syria in Ramoth-gilead; and the
29 Syrians wounded Joram. And king Joram went back to be healed in Jezreel of the wounds which the Syrians had given him at Ramah, when he fought against Hazael king of Syria. And Ahaziah the son of Jehoram king of Judah went

age is given as *forty-two*. This cannot be correct, but is due to a misreading of the Hebrew letters which were used as numerals. Jehoram, the father of Ahaziah, was *thirty-two* years old (see verse 17) when he began to reign and he reigned eight years. If Ahaziah was two and twenty at his father's death, he was born when Jehoram was eighteen. This is not uncommon in the East. Indeed we find from 2 Chron. xxii. 1 that Jehoram had other children older than Ahaziah, but they were slain by the Arabian invaders.

Athaliah, the daughter of Omri] Athaliah was the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel and so the grand-daughter of Omri. For this manner of speech cf. verse 20 of the next chapter, where Jehu is called the *son* of Nimshi, though he has been twice spoken of in previous verses (2, 14) as the son of Jehoshaphat, the son of Nimshi.

27. *he walked in the way of the house of Ahab*] The Chronicler adds 'for his mother was his counsellor to do wickedly'.

and did evil] R.V. **that which was evil.** The usual change, which will not again be noticed.

28. *to the war against Hazael*] Hazael was already beginning to fulfil the forecast of Elisha. Ramoth-gilead belonged to Israel (1 Kings xxii. 3) but now, as in Ahab's reign, it was being seized by the Syrians. Joram, Ahab's son, had ill-fortune like that of his father in the Syrian war, though as is evident from the next chapter he kept possession of Ramoth and left his officers there.

29. *And king Joram went back* [R.V. **returned**] *to be healed in Jezreel*] The verb is changed to conform to the translation in Chronicles. Jezreel was one of the capital cities of the northern kingdom, where was a royal palace, and where all attendance could be procured.

Ramah] This is put for Ramoth-gilead, both here and in the parallel passage in Chronicles, but nowhere else. Ramah is a singular noun meaning 'high land' and Ramoth is the plural of it, and Ramah is used for the name of two or three other places, one in the tribe of Benjamin and one in the hill country of Ephraim, all no doubt distinguished by their elevated situation. The land of Gilead was all mountainous, and the town of Ramoth was perhaps built on more than one hill though the engagement where Joram was wounded may have taken place on one special height.

THE
KINGDOM
OF
ISRAEL
Zidon
Sidon
DAMASCUS
Damascus
Hermon
Mt. Hermon
Valley of Lebanon
Lebanon
Tyre
KEDESH
Kedesh
Waters of Merom
Ashteroth Karnaim
Argob
Edrei
Bashan
Archo
Acre
Mt. Carmel
Sea of Chinnereth
Sea of Galilee
GOLAN
Aphek
Ashtaroth
Bozrah
Dor
Megiddo
Jezreel
Mt. Gilboa
Jabesh-gilead
Mahanaim
Dothan
Beth-gamul
SAMARIA
Nahr Falik
SHECHEM
Mt. Gerizim
Joppa
Jaffa
RAMOTH-GILEAD
Ramoth-gilead
Lod
Ludd
Ophni
Gezer
Jericho
Heshbon
JERUSALEM
Gath
Bethshera
Mideba
Ammon
Plain of Sharon
Valley of Megiddo
Plain of Esdraelon
Jordan
Mediterranean
English Miles.
0 5 10 20 30
Longitude East from Greenwich
35° 36°

down to see Joram the son of Ahab in Jezreel, because he was sick.

And Elisha the prophet called one of the children of the 9
prophets, and said unto him, Gird up thy loins, and take this box of oil in thine hand, and go *to* Ramoth-gilead: and when thou comest thither, look out there Jehu the son a
of Jehoshaphat the son of Nimshi, and go in, and make him

Ahaziah...went down to see Joram] After the battle Ahaziah at first returned, probably with his portion of the allied army, to Jerusalem. But the friendship between the two royal houses was so close that he presently went northward to Jezreel to pay a visit to his wounded ally and kinsman. The Chronicler says 'the destruction of Ahaziah was of God by coming to Joram'.

CH. IX. 1—10. ELISHA SENDS ONE OF THE SONS OF THE PROPHETS TO ANOINT JEHU, AND GIVE HIM HIS COMMISSION. (Not in Chronicles.)

And Elisha the prophet called one of the children [R.V. **sons**] *of the prophets*] 'Children' gives a wrong idea. The prophetic communities were formed of men who came together for worship, and were not necessarily connected in any family relationship, any more than Elisha was connected with Elijah. Elisha had an attendant who served him as he had served his master. Such a one he chooses for his messenger to Jehu.

Gird up thy loins] The moment had come for executing God's vengeance on the house of Ahab, and the work is to be done without delay. Joram's conduct seems to have prepared the feelings of the army for a revolt.

take this box [R.V. **vial**] *of oil*] 'Vial' is the rendering of this word in A.V. of 1 Sam. x. 1 and is a more appropriate word when used for an oil vessel. It only occurs there and in this chapter. Jehu alone of all the kings of Israel was anointed.

to *Ramoth-gilead*] Here Jehu and his fellow officers had apparently been left in charge, while Joram went away to Jezreel. But from Joram's action, when he finds Jehu approaching Jezreel (verse 21), it is clear that his wound was not of a very serious character. It may be therefore that he had seized the first opportunity of withdrawing from the war to the capital. If so the soldiery would be inclined to favour the generals who remained through the campaign, and to hold the king in contempt. This would explain the ease with which Jehu's attempt succeeded in Ramoth-gilead, and the readiness with which his fellow generals fell in with the movement.

2. *Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat the son of Nimshi*] Jehu was no doubt well known both in the army and elsewhere, and his afterlife shews that he was a man of action and with very slight scruples. The watchman on the tower in Jezreel knows his manner of riding, and there seems to have been little hesitation on the part of the messengers

arise up from among his brethren, and carry him *to* an inner
3 chamber: then take the box of oil, and pour *it* on his head, and say, Thus saith the LORD, I have anointed thee king over Israel. Then open the door, and flee, and tarry not.
4 So the young man, *even* the young man the prophet, went
5 *to* Ramoth-gilead. And when he came, behold, the captains of the host *were* sitting; and he said, I have an errand to thee, O captain. And Jehu said, Unto which of all us?
6 And he said, To thee, O captain. And he arose, and went into the house; and he poured the oil on his head, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I have anointed thee king over the people of the LORD, *even* over

whom Joram sent out about obeying Jehu's order 'Turn thee behind me'

and go in] We see from this that the troops and officers of Israel were within the city, and holding it against the Syrians.

from among his brethren] i. e. His fellow officers, his brothers in arms.

to *an inner chamber*] Literally 'a chamber within a chamber'. See note on 1 Kings xx. 30. The design of this privacy was no doubt that Jehu might be at liberty to take his own measures for carrying out his commission, without the interference of any but comrades of his own choice.

3. *Thus saith the Lord, I have anointed thee*] 'God who would not countenance (by anointing) the erection of that usurped throne, would countenance the alteration. Or is it that by this visible testimony of divine ordination the courage of the Israelitish captains might be raised up, to second the high and bold attempt of him, whom they saw destined from heaven to rule?' (Bp Hall.)

flee, and tarry not] The suddenness of the messenger's arrival and departure would be sure to produce a deep impression on those who observed him.

5. *the captains of the host* were *sitting*] Perhaps discussing some matter connected with the defence of the city. Jehu is the one who speaks to the new-comer. We may take it that he was the moving spirit in the war-council, and hence had gained a popularity beyond that of king Joram.

6. *went into the house*] The council was sitting in the courtyard, a place which in Eastern houses can be kept somewhat private.

over the people of the Lord, even *over Israel*] Though the northern kingdom had cast aside the true worship of Jehovah, and followed readily in the ways of Jeroboam, yet the abundance of prophetic labour which was expended in Israel exceeds, as far as we learn from the Bible, that which was bestowed on the more faithful Judah. Israel is still the people of the Lord.

Israel. And thou shalt smite the house of Ahab thy master, 7
that I may avenge the blood of my servants the prophets,
and the blood of all the servants of the LORD, at the hand
of Jezebel. For the whole house of Ahab shall perish: and 8
I will cut off from Ahab *him that* pisseth against the
wall, and *him that is* shut up and left in Israel: and I will 9
make the house of Ahab like the house of Jeroboam the
son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of
Ahijah: and the dogs shall eat Jezebel in the portion of 10
Jezreel, and *there shall be* none to bury *her*. And he open-
ed the door, and fled.

7. *thou shalt smite the house of Ahab thy master*] The punishment of Ahab had been postponed because of his repentance (1 Kings xxi. 29) but the sins of the father, which have blossomed and borne evil fruit in his children, will at last be thoroughly punished. The instrument chosen is one who had been in the service of Ahab, and so was aware of the evil that had been wrought by him.

my servants, the prophets] Although Obadiah was able to save a hundred, Jezebel still made havoc of the rest. And it appears from the words that follow that not the prophets only, but all the servants of the Lord, had been the objects of her rage. And she was yet alive and in power. There must have been much zeal for Jehovah to sustain the righteous spirit which manifests itself so frequently in the history of Elijah and Elisha.

at the hand of Jezebel] i.e. God will require from her and her family the penalty for all the evil that has been wrought.

8. On this verse see the notes on 1 Kings xiv. 10. The entire family is doomed. God will cut off from Ahab **every man child.** (R.V.)

and him that is *shut up and left in Israel*] R.V. **him that is shut up and him that is left at large in Israel.** The phrase is intended to embrace every one, young or old, bond or free.

9. *like the house of Jeroboam*] Against whom the like prophecy is spoken in 1 Kings xiv. 10, and against Baasha in 1 Kings xvi. 3, 4.

10. *the dogs shall eat Jezebel*] This fate had been foretold by Elijah 1 Kings xxi. 23. The dogs in Eastern cities prowl hungrily about, and act as scavengers. Hence they are in bad repute, and the name 'dog' is one of greatest contempt. To be devoured by them was the extreme of degradation and penalty to an Oriental mind.

in the portion of Jezreel] In 1 Kings xxi. 23 the Hebrew word used signifies 'wall' (R.V. **rampart**) though according to some authorities the word should be the same which is used here. 'By the rampart' indicates that she should lie just where she was thrown down close to the city wall. The 'portion' signifies the ground a little more outlying, which in an Eastern town is used for the deposit of all offal and rubbish.

and there shall be *none to bury* her] One moment she will be queen, the next, cast out of the window by the eunuchs, and her lot so

11 Then Jehu came forth to the servants of his lord: and *one* said unto him, *Is all* well? wherefore came this mad *fellow* to thee? And he said unto them, Ye know the man,
12 and his communication. And they said, *It is* false; tell us now. And he said, Thus and thus spake he to me, saying, Thus saith the LORD, I have anointed thee king over Israel.
13 Then they hasted, and took every man his garment, and

changed that none shall care to go and see what becomes of her body.

11—26. JEHU IS PROCLAIMED, AND GOES TO JEZREEL. JORAM IS SLAIN, AND HIS BODY CAST INTO THE PORTION OF NABOTH THE JEZREELITE. (Not in Chronicles.)

11. *to the servants of his lord*] i.e. To the other captains with whom he had before been in conference. They were all Joram's officers.

wherefore came this mad fellow *to thee?*] The visit had been made abruptly and in much haste, and amid the camp there would be but little respect for the garb of the prophet. We can see too from the words of the next verse that there was much of bluntness and rudeness in the speech of these soldiers to one another. We need not then suppose that they deemed the prophet a madman, but this is the term they are pleased to apply to him owing to his sudden movements.

Ye know the man] No doubt this applies to the appearance and dress of the prophets which distinguished them from others. It means, 'Ye know to what class the man belongs, and so you can guess at the nature of his communication.' Such a man in such haste comes only with a message 'Thus saith the Lord'. Others have referred the words to what the officers had before said, calling the messenger 'mad'. This would make Jehu's reply mean, 'You call him mad, and of course then his communication must be only a madman's raving.' So R.V., **and what his talk was.**

12. It is *false*] In the bluntest way they make Jehu understand that his answer is a mere subterfuge, and that in spite of having called the prophet a madman, they feel that he has not come without some special errand.

Thus saith the Lord, I have anointed thee] It is worthy of notice how constantly the people of the northern kingdom, though it was given up to calf-worship, and Baal-worship, yet attach the highest importance to the messages of God's prophets, and act upon them without demur. Jehu and his companions, being about the court of Ahab, Ahaziah and Joram, no doubt joined in the idolatry and excesses of the time. But at the voice of the prophet they are prepared to dethrone the house of Ahab and put Jehu in his place.

13. *Then they hasted*] The LXX. gives 'they heard it and hastened'. This action on the part of the generals shews how little they were attached to the house of Ahab.

took every man his garment] The loose Oriental robe which could

put *it* under him on the top of the stairs, and blew with trumpets, saying, Jehu is king. So Jehu the son of Jeho- 14
shaphat the son of Nimshi conspired against Joram. (Now Joram had kept Ramoth-gilead, he and all Israel, because

easily be laid aside, and which they probably had laid aside or allowed to fall off during the consultation.

and put it *under him*] They made a seat for Jehu by folding their garments, and piling them together. The expression 'under him' shews what use was made of all the garments. Some have thought that the robes were used as a carpet, and laid all the way up the stairs from the court where they had been in conference. The stairs were outside the building and went from the courtyard up to the roof. Thus Jehu would have walked in state to the place which they chose for the proclamation. But the conspirators were in too great haste for this sort of parade. They extemporised a cushion with their robes, and set Jehu upon them.

on the top of the stairs] There is some difficulty in explaining the word rendered 'top'. Primarily it means 'a bone'. Then something strong and firm. Hence it has been thought to have the sense here of the body of the staircase, and so to signify 'the stairs themselves'. Thus the translation would be merely 'on the stairs'. Others clinging to the sense of 'bone' have translated 'on the bare steps' (R.V. margin). The Vulgate appears to have taken the word as equivalent to 'in the manner of' and translates 'in similitudinem tribunalis'. But without the steps there could be little made by the garments to look like a rostrum or tribune. The LXX. merely transliterates the Hebrew word ἐπὶ τὸ γαρὲμ. The sense 'top' is obtained by considering that the prominent part of the staircase is meant by this expression, and that for the purpose here desired, the best possible place was that where Jehu would be set above the people. The generals must have gathered such a company as they could on a short notice, and when Jehu was seated in the best state they could prepare, have made their proclamation while he sat on the extemporized throne.

blew with trumpets] For this cf. the proclamation of Solomon (1 Kings i. 34).

14. *conspired against Joram*] The verb has the notion of 'binding'. Hence it implies here that Jehu made a league with the other generals to carry out the deposition and slaying of Joram. The word in the form here used is found again 2 Chron. xxiv. 25, 26 of those who combined 'to execute judgement' on Joash king of Judah.

Now Joram had kept [R.V. omits *had*] *Ramoth-gilead*] The reference is to the existing state of the war. The army of Israel was in Ramoth, to protect the place against the threatened invasion of the Syrians.

he and all Israel] Meaning the greater part of the army, all the soldiery which could come into the field. Syria was clearly a most formidable enemy. Hazael was carrying out to the full the predictions of Elisha (viii. 12).

15 of Hazael king of Syria. But king Joram was returned to
be healed in Jezreel of the wounds which the Syrians had
given him, when he fought with Hazael king of Syria.)
And Jehu said, If it be your minds, *then* let none go forth
16 *nor* escape out of the city to go to tell *it* in Jezreel. So
Jehu rode *in a chariot*, and went to Jezreel; for Joram lay
there. And Ahaziah king of Judah was come down to see
17 Joram. And there stood a watchman on the tower in
Jezreel, and he spied the company of Jehu as he came, and
said, I see a company. And Joram said, Take a horseman,

15. *But king Joram was returned*] Though he was at Jezreel professedly for the cure of his wounds, Joram was sufficiently recovered to be able to entertain Ahaziah, and also to go forth in his chariot to meet Jehu. If he stayed in his capital thus, while the army was in force at Ramoth-gilead and fully occupied with the Syrian foe, we can easily understand how the feelings of the soldiery would turn from him to the officers who remained with them, and especially to Jehu, who seems to have been the man of action among the number.

If it be your minds] R.V. **If this be your mind.** The LXX. renders 'If your mind be with me', which gives the sense, though there is nothing in the Hebrew to represent 'with me' any more than the 'this' of R.V. Jehu, as was fit until his throne was secure, takes counsel with his fellow-generals.

let none go forth nor *escape*] R.V. **let none escape and go forth.** The literal meaning of the Hebrew is 'let no escaper go forth'. Hence the change in R.V. To secure this must be their care. Jehu himself with a faithful few will start at once to execute the judgement which has been laid upon him. His best chance of success is to take Joram by surprise.

16. *went to Jezreel*] After these words the LXX. has "for Joram king of Israel was being cured in Jezreel of the wounds which the Syrians gave him in Ramoth in the battle with Hazael king of Syria, for he was a mighty man and man of power".

And Ahaziah king of Judah was come down to see Joram] This visit of Ahaziah to Joram and its fatal result is the only portion of the history alluded to by the Chronicler (2 Chron. xxii. 7—9). He tells how the visit was ordained by God for Ahaziah's destruction. He gives however some variations in reference to the manner of Ahaziah's death, on which see below, verse 27.

17. *And there stood a watchman*] R.V. **Now the watchman stood.** While such danger was threatening one part of the land, and the army was in the field, the watchman would be kept permanently on the look-out for any messenger that might be seen coming. The tower was probably some lofty part of the royal palace, for the news seems easily to have been conveyed to the king.

and send to meet them, and let him say, *Is it* peace? So there went one on horseback to meet him, and 18
said, Thus saith the king, *Is it* peace? And Jehu said, What hast thou to do with peace? turn thee behind me. And the watchman told, saying, The messenger came to them, but he cometh not again. Then he sent *out* a 19
second on horseback, which came to them, and said, Thus saith the king, *Is it* peace? And Jehu answered, What hast thou to do with peace? turn thee behind me. And the 20
watchman told, saying, He came even unto them, and cometh not again: and the driving *is* like the driving of Jehu the son of Nimshi; for he driveth furiously. And 21
Joram said, Make ready. And his chariot was made ready.

Is it *peace?*] There would be much anxiety in the king's mind, though he would not expect what was coming. He might suppose that the army in Ramoth had been defeated, and that the hasty messenger was coming to announce that Ramoth was again in the hand of Syria. So the 'Is all well?' of the margin of R.V. gives an excellent sense, and is the rendering of the same phrase in verse 11, though it does not admit of the reply which Jehu gives in the next verse.

18. *What hast thou to do with peace?*] What concern is it of thine whether I come peaceably or not? My errand is not to thee. Josephus says the messenger's enquiry was about affairs in the camp, for that the king's questions were about them. Jehu bade him not to worry about these things but to follow him (*Ant.* IX. 6. 3). The design of Jehu's order was that no information should be brought to Joram.

20. *the driving* is *like the driving of Jehu*] It is clear from this that Jehu was well known, and the manner in which he would lead forward his men was unmistakeable.

the son of Nimshi] Really 'grandson', see verse 2, and the note on chapter viii. 28.

he driveth furiously] The word rendered 'furiously' is from the same root as that rendered 'mad' in verse 11. This is the sense given by the Greek and Latin versions, but Josephus as if explaining this word says 'Jehu journeyed leisurely and in good order'. The Chaldee and Arabic also explain it by 'quietly'.

21. *Make ready*] Literally as in margin of R.V. 'yoke'. The mention of Jehu has shewn Joram that the reason must be a weighty one which brings the commander of the army from Ramoth at full speed. So he goes to meet him that he may know what has happened. Apparently he set forth without any body guard, and thus is easily put to flight when Jehu attacks him. The two kings went forth in somewhat of a state array. Both had been in the defence of Ramoth-gilead and so were both interested in what they expected would be news from the army.

And Joram king of Israel and Ahaziah king of Judah went out, each in his chariot, and they went out against Jehu,
22 and met him in the portion of Naboth the Jezreelite. And it came to pass, when Joram saw Jehu, that he said, *Is it* peace, Jehu? And he answered, What peace, so long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel and her witchcrafts *are*
23 *so* many? And Joram turned his hands, and fled, and said
24 to Ahaziah, *There is* treachery, O Ahaziah. And Jehu drew a bow with his full strength, and smote Jehoram between his arms, and the arrow went out at his heart, and he sunk
25 down in his chariot. Then said *Jehu* to Bidkar his captain, Take up, *and* cast him in the portion of the field of Naboth the Jezreelite: for remember how that, when I and thou rode together after Ahab his father, the LORD laid this

went out against Jehu] R.V. **to meet Jehu.** There is not necessarily an adverse sense in the word, and the kings had no suspicion of what Jehu's real errand was. It might be disaster in the army, but rebellion was out of their thoughts.

in the portion of Naboth the Jezreelite] This was 'hard by the palace' (1 Kings xxi. 1) so that the royal chariots had not gone far before they came upon Jehu. The spot was no longer 'a vineyard' as when it belonged to Naboth, but had been converted by Ahab and Jezebel to some other purpose.

22. *What peace*] i.e. How can there be any peace, while the evil doings of Jezebel continue as great as before. By 'whoredoms' the Scripture writers continually signify 'the practice of idolatry' and that is probably the sense here. Cf. Exod. xxxiv. 15, 16; Deut. xxxi. 6: Jud. viii. 27; Jer. iii. 6 &c. 'The witchcrafts' probably allude to the incantations and charms employed to obtain responses from the heathen gods. In Is. xlvii. 9, 12, where the word is rendered '*sorceries*', this is clearly the sense, and cf. also Micah v. 12 'I will cut off *witchcraft*', and in Nahum iii. 4 Nineveh is called 'the mistress of *witchcrafts*...that selleth families through her *witchcrafts*'.

23. *Joram turned his hands*] i.e. Wheeled his chariot about to go in a contrary direction. Cf. 1 Kings xxii. 34.

24. *drew a* [R.V. **his**] *bow with his full strength*] Literally as on margin of R. V. 'filled his hand with the bow', which expresses the attitude of a bowman as he shoots.

between his arms] As he was in flight, the arrow passed between his shoulders and so went through the breast. He was mortally wounded and could not be stayed up in his chariot, but died at once. Instead of 'in his chariot' the LXX. renders 'upon his knees, reading the preposition in ברכבו as a part of the root and treating the word as if it had been ברכיו.

25. *rode together after Ahab his father*] Jehu had long experience

burden upon him; surely I have seen yesterday the blood 26
of Naboth, and the blood of his sons, saith the LORD; and
I will requite thee in this plat, saith the LORD. Now there-
fore take *and* cast him into the plat *of ground*, according to
the word of the LORD.

But when Ahaziah the king of Judah saw *this*, he fled *by* 27
the way of the garden house. And Jehu followed after him,

of the doings of Ahab's family, and had not forgotten the prophetic words of Elijah. 'Little did he think when he heard that message that his hands would act it' (Bp Hall). By 'riding together after Ahab' we are not to understand that they were both together in the same chariot or both in Ahab's chariot, but that they were together among the king's retinue, when he went down to take possession of Naboth's vineyard.

laid this burden upon him] Or (as R.V. margin) 'uttered this oracle against him'. The noun is that which is so often used by the prophets, especially Isaiah, for the oracle spoken against any city or nation. Cf. Is. xiii. 1; xv. 1; xvii. 1; xix. 1, &c. Also 2 Chron. xxiv. 27. The verb also is cognate with the noun, and signifies here 'to lift up', i.e. the voice, in the utterance of a prophecy.

26. *the blood of Naboth, and the blood of his sons*] It appears from this that Jezebel in order that she might put all claimants out of the way, had caused the family of Naboth to be killed as well as himself. So Ahab's son pays the penalty of his father's wrongdoing, and both father and son are brought at death into the field which they had gained with so much crime, and as Elijah had foretold, dogs lick the blood of both.

saith the Lord] The phrase is not the usual Hebrew, but a more solemn form of expression, used in the prophets and especially in Jeremiah. Cf. Jer. i. 8, 15, 19, &c.

I will requite thee in this plat] Jehu gives the sense but not the words of 1 Kings xxi. 19.

take and *cast him*] i.e. Lift his dead body out of the chariot and carry it and throw it forth into the ground which was taken from Naboth.

27—29. DEATH OF AHAZIAH KING OF JUDAH. (2 Chron. xxii. 7—9.)

27. by *the way of the garden house*] The events took place close to the royal grounds, for Naboth's vineyard lay in the neighbourhood. The garden house may have been some building at the extremity of the domain by which flight from the scene of destruction appeared easy to Ahaziah. The LXX. however treats it as a proper name, writing Βαιθγάν. This has been supposed to be the same as En-gannim ='the well of the gardens' which is identified with the modern *Jenin*. This place lies south from Jezreel on the road to Samaria, and would be on the shortest route by which Ahaziah could make his way to Jerusalem.

And Jehu followed after him] i.e. In the person of his partizans

and said, Smite him also in the chariot. *And they did so* at the going up to Gur, which *is* by Ibleam. And he fled
28 *to* Megiddo, and died there. And his servants carried him *in a chariot* to Jerusalem, and buried him in his sepulchre

and followers, to whom he gave the order 'Smite him also'. Jehu wished to get into Jezreel as soon as possible, and left the fate of the king of Judah to others.

Smite him also in the chariot] In the original the command continues 'at the going up to Gur' (R.V. at the ascent of Gur), as though Jehu knowing the country specified to his men the place where they would be most likely to overtake Ahaziah, where the ground began to rise, and so would retard his flight. This seeming somewhat unnatural, the A.V. inserted 'And they did so', the R.V. 'and they smote him'. Neither Gur nor Ibleam have been identified, and there is some difference between the statements here and the narrative in Chronicles. There we read (2 Chron. xxii. 9) that Jehu 'sought Ahaziah, and they caught him (for he was hid in Samaria) and brought him to Jehu, and when they had slain him they buried him'. The LXX. in this passage has a rendering which suggests how the two accounts may be reconciled. There it is said that Ahaziah had gone to Samaria to be cured (*ἰατρευόμενον*). Suppose that in the pursuit Jehu's command to smite him had been carried out, and the wounded king escaped to Samaria in which direction he was hurrying. If he remained there to have his wound attended to, the emissaries of Jehu might discover him, when the new king came to his capital to take possession, and Ahaziah might then be taken to Megiddo and slain. The Chronicler speaks more at length on the particulars of Ahaziah's death, as the evil issue of an alliance between a king of Judah and the house of Ahab was the sort of lesson on which it suited his purpose to dwell.

And he fled to *Megiddo*] Megiddo was on the southern extremity of the plain of Esdraelon, and by its position was a place of much strategical importance. It had a king when the Israelites entered Canaan, and it was the scene of the battle against the Canaanites in the days of Deborah. It was a place of importance in the days of Solomon (1 Kings iv. 12) for he made it one of his commissariat stations. At a later period it was the scene of Josiah's death (2 Kings xxiii. 29) when he had taken part with Assyria against Pharaoh-necho, king of Egypt. If we consider 'Samaria' in 2 Chron. xxii. 9 to mean 'the land of Samaria' and not the city, Megiddo was a part thereof, and in that way another method of reconciling the narratives in Kings and Chronicles would be found.

and died there] It was part of Jehu's commission to have Ahaziah slain, for he was Ahab's grandson.

28. *his servants carried him* in a chariot *to Jerusalem*] As is seen afterwards by his conduct in Jezebel's case Jehu had no wish to deprive the kin of Ahab of regal burial after they were slain. Hence the servants of Ahaziah would be allowed to carry their master's body to

with his fathers in the city of David. And in the eleventh 29
year of Joram the son of Ahab *began* Ahaziah to reign over
Judah.

And when Jehu was come to Jezreel, Jezebel heard *of it;* 30
and she painted her face, and tired her head, and looked
out at a window. And as Jehu entered in at the gate, she 31
said, *Had* Zimri peace, who slew his master? And he lift 32

Jerusalem without molestation. The italics of A.V. in this verse are a mistake. The verb signifies 'to carry in a chariot'.

29. *And in the eleventh year of Joram*...began *Ahaziah to reign*] This verse seems out of place. It is not usual to mention the date at which a king begins to reign, after his death, but at his accession. This was done for Ahaziah in viii. 25, but there it is said that it was in the *twelfth* year of Joram that his reign began. So small a variation is of very little account when we consider how the Jews reckoned the regnal years of their kings, but the unusual position of the notice in this verse casts some suspicion upon it. The LXX. however represents it.

30—37. The fate of Jezebel. (Not in Chronicles.)

30. *when Jehu was come to Jezreel*] Very little time could have elapsed between the slaying of Joram and the advance from Naboth's vineyard to the palace. But the news of what Jehu had done had already been brought to Jezebel, for she knows that he has murdered the king her son. As queen-mother she lived in the royal city, and probably in the royal palace. On the position of the queen-mother and her influence in Eastern courts see on 1 Kings ii. 19. Her action Bp Hall thinks was with the hope 'to daunt the courage of a usurper with the sudden beams of majesty'.

and she painted her face] R.V. **eyes.** The A.V. gives a wrong idea, though placing the literal rendering on the margin 'put her eyes in painting'. The process is common still in the East. The preparation used is made from antimony, which gives when applied to the eyelashes and eyebrows, a dark outline, as a setting to the eyes, which while making them look larger adds also to their brilliancy.

and tired her head] Putting on some ornamental diadem or insignia of royalty. As she was to die, and she could expect no less, she would look the queen to the last.

and looked out at a window] Josephus (*Ant.* IX. 6. 4) describes her as 'standing upon the tower'. It is clear that the building in which she was formed part of the city wall, and that the gateway by which the city was entered was close by. So the window may have been in some lofty part.

31. *at the gate*] Of Jezreel. The king's palace was sure to be there, because it was the custom for the king to sit in the gate to hear causes and complaints brought to him for judgement.

Had *Zimri peace, who slew his master?*] R.V. **Is it peace, thou**

up his face to the window, and said, Who *is* on my side? who? And there looked out to him two *or* three eunuchs.
33 And he said, Throw her down. So they threw her down: and *some* of her blood was sprinkled on the wall, and on
34 the horses: and he trode her under foot. And when he was come in, he did eat and drink, and said, Go, see now this cursed *woman*, and bury her: for she *is* a king's

Zimri, thy master's murderer? The Hebrew has '**his** master's murderer'. These sudden changes of person are common in Hebrew but cannot be reproduced easily in English. For an example cf. verses 1, 2 of Psalm lxviii. 'God...cause His face to shine...that Thy way may be known'. Jezebel could not expect peace from Jehu. The salutation must therefore be looked on as having lost its literal significance, and become a mere exclamation. For Zimri's slaughter of Elah, and his seven days' reign, cf. 1 Kings xvi. 9—20. With a like short tenure of power, and the same fate, Jezebel would threaten Jehu.

32. *to the window*] Here the LXX. adds 'and saw her'. After which it continues, 'And he said, Who art thou? Come down with me. And there looked out &c.' Josephus makes Jezebel's remark to be: 'A pretty servant you, who have killed your master!' and then describes Jehu's reply in much the same way as the LXX. The Hebrew as represented in our version is exactly like the impetuous sentence of such a man as Jehu was.

two or *three eunuchs*] There is no conjunction in the original, as the italics in A.V. indicate. But in all languages the omission of connecting particles between numerals is common. There have however been several explanations offered; as that at first two looked forth and, soon after, another; or that two looked out at one window and three at another. Most likely the omission is a colloquial form of expression. 'Twothree', as one word, is used in some English dialects for 'several'. See Halliwell's Glossary *s.v.*

33. *So they threw her down*] It is easy to understand how such an imperious mistress would have few friends among her servants. And to them, as well as to her, the news of Jehu's revolt and Joram's death would have been brought. So with Eastern fickleness they at once take the side which seems victorious.

some *of her blood*] The fall was from such a height as to kill her, and apparently she was torn and bruised as she descended, so that the blood from her wounds spirted forth at once.

and he trode her under foot] i. e. Drove his horses and chariot over her fallen body. Hence the LXX. renders '*they* trode her'.

34. *And when he was come in*] To the palace, where now he was master. Not only the eunuchs of Jezebel, but the household of Joram appears to have been ready to serve him, for the queen-mother is hardly dead before Jehu is set down to a banquet in the palace.

and said, Go, see now this cursed woman] [R.V. **And he said, See**

daughter. And they went to bury her: but they found no 35
more of her than the skull, and the feet, and the palms of
her hands. Wherefore they came again, and told him. 36
And he said, This *is* the word of the LORD, which he spake
by his servant Elijah the Tishbite, saying, In the portion of
Jezreel shall dogs eat the flesh of Jezebel: and the carcase 37
of Jezebel shall be as dung upon the face of the field in the
portion of Jezreel; *so* that they shall not say, This *is* Jezebel.

And Ahab had seventy sons in Samaria. And Jehu 10
wrote letters, and sent *to* Samaria, unto the rulers of Jez-

now to this cursed woman] The 'Go' of A.V. is of course implied but not expressed in the original. By 'cursed' he means that she has brought God's curse upon herself by her idolatry and bad example. It is no objurgation of his own. The word is the same that is employed in that solemn list of God's curses on evil-doing in Deut. xxvii. and xxviii.

she is *a king's daughter*] Jezebel was daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians. See note on 1 Kings xvi. 31.

35. *they went to bury her*] While Jehu was refreshing himself in the palace, the dogs gathered about the dead body of Jezebel and devoured it. So completely had the tide of popular favour turned towards Jehu, that there was not found one to protect the corpse of Jezebel.

36. *This* is *the word of the Lord*] In one point after another he finds the curse fulfilled. Now it is Joram's death in Naboth's vineyard, and now the dogs devouring Jezebel. For the word of the Lord concerning Jezebel, see 1 Kings xxi. 23.

CH. X. 1—11. JEHU DESTROYS THE WHOLE FAMILY OF AHAB. (Not in Chronicles.)

1. *And* [R.V. **Now**] *Ahab had seventy sons*] The conjunction is the usual copulative, but it is somewhat in the style of O.T. translation to commence a new section of the narrative with 'Now'.

in Samaria] It would seem that the name here is for the whole *district*, as some of those slain appear to have been in Jezreel (see verse 11). But in verse 2 we have an allusion to a fenced city as though the *city* of Samaria were specially intended.

And Jehu wrote letters] Josephus (*Ant.* IX. 6. 5) says '*two* letters, one to the bringers up of the children, the other to the authorities of Samaria'.

sent to *Samaria, unto the rulers of Jezreel*] There is a difficulty here. We cannot see why the rulers of Jezreel should be in Samaria, or why the great men in Israel should have been named 'rulers of Jezreel'. Hence some have suggested that for 'Jezreel' we should read 'Israel'. The LXX. says 'unto the rulers of Samaria', and with this agrees Josephus. But it is very clumsy to say 'he sent to Samaria unto the rulers of Samaria'. Thenius suggests that the original was 'he sent

reel, to the elders, and to them that brought up Ahab's
2 *children*, saying, Now as soon as this letter cometh to you,
seeing your master's sons *are* with you, and *there are* with
you chariots and horses, a fenced city also, and armour;
3 look even out the best and meetest of your master's sons,
and set *him* on his father's throne, and fight for your master's
4 house. But they were exceedingly afraid, and said, Behold,
two kings stood not before him: how then shall we stand?

from Jezreel to the rulers of Samaria' which seems much the easiest solution.

It was extremely politic of Jehu to send a letter to Samaria rather than to go there before he had gathered a force around him. He had come from Ramoth-gilead with a very small company, and the fame of what he had done at Jezreel would produce more effect than his presence in Samaria with a mere handful of men to support him.

to [R.V. **even**] *the elders*] As there is no preposition here in the original, and the preposition is expressed in the next clause, it seems more correct to take 'the elders' as in apposition to 'the rulers of Jezreel'.

and to [R.V. **unto**] *them that brought up Ahab's* children] [R.V. the sons of **Ahab**]. The change in the preposition is merely to indicate that it is the same word as that before 'rulers' in the previous clause. In the final words the Hebrew is somewhat irregular. 'Them that brought up' should properly be in construction with some noun, but as 'children' or 'sons' is not expressed, the word stands absolutely, and 'Ahab' is put without connection after it. No doubt the sense is expressed in the translation. Of course it was only for the 'sons' of the royal family that this provision of tutors was made, because out of them would come the successor to the throne.

2. *Now* [R.V. **And now**] *as soon as this letter cometh to you*] Only an extract from the letter is here given, which the Hebrew correctly represents, and which R.V. has shewn by its translation. See a similar instance before, chap. v. 6.

a fenced city] This must refer to the city of Samaria, which probably was better fortified than Jezreel, and which had been especially cared for by the family of Omri by whom it was built.

3. *look even* [R.V. **look ye**] *out the best*] The insertion of 'even' gives a false emphasis, and the conjunction of the original is merely the mark of the apodosis, and is properly left unrendered in English. No doubt in the popular mind some prince had been marked out as heir to the throne, and some order of succession may have been indicated by Ahab himself, if his elder sons died without issue, but at such a juncture he would be chosen who would rally to him most assistance. Jehu sends his message like one perfectly confident in the effect it will produce.

4. *Behold, two kings stood not before him*] Jehu's prompt action had prevented any details of what had been done from reaching

And *he* that *was* over the house, and *he* that *was* over the 5
city, the elders also, and the bringers up *of the children*,
sent to Jehu, saying, We *are* thy servants, and will do all
that thou shalt bid us; we will not make any king: do thou
that which *is* good in thine eyes. Then he wrote a letter 6
the second time to them, saying, If ye *be* mine, and *if* ye
will hearken unto my voice, take ye the heads of the men
your master's sons, and come to me to Jezreel by to morrow

Samaria. Perhaps had they known how the two kings had been taken by surprise and shot down as they were expecting to hear a message from the army, the elders of Samaria might have offered some resistance.

5. *And* he *that* was *over the house*] R.V. **household.** This was an official personage, the chief of the royal personal officers. So it appears from the enumeration in this verse that all the authorities yielded at once. The LXX. gives the phrase in the plural 'they that were over the household &c.' With the singular it is not necessary to think of one officer merely. 'Every one of the king's personal servants' is implied.

the bringers up of [R.V. **they that brought up**] the children] Thus the word is translated in the same manner in both verses.

and will do all that thou shalt bid us] As the extermination of every person who might hereafter put forward a claim to the throne was the general rule in Eastern revolutions, we shall hardly be wrong in supposing that these men knew, when they tendered their service to Jehu, the sort of work he would wish them to undertake.

we will not make any king] R.V. **any man king.** The noun is expressed in the original, and makes the profession of submission somewhat more emphatic. There should be no opposition either on behalf of Ahab's family or anybody else.

do thou that *which* is *good*] The LXX. has 'we will do &c.' But this they had already said.

6. *a letter the second time*] Before he presents himself to them, he will let their alarm involve them more deeply than he is involved in the destruction of the royal family.

take ye the heads] So Nicanor's head (1 Macc. vii. 47; 2 Macc. xv. 30) was struck off and brought to Jerusalem, and David smote off the head of Goliath (1 Sam. xvii. 54) and brought it with him from the battle-field.

come to me to Jezreel] From what follows we should not discover that they obeyed this part of the order. But no doubt they did, and were ready at the gate, when Jehu came forth on the morrow, to hear what he would say of their prompt obedience. The distance between Jezreel and Samaria was only a journey of a few hours. The heads seem to have been delivered to their new master on the evening of the day on which they were asked for.

this time. Now the king's sons, *being* seventy persons, *were* with the great *men* of the city, which brought them up.
7 And it came to pass, when the letter came to them, that they took the king's sons, and slew seventy persons, and put their heads in baskets, and sent him *them* to Jezreel.
8 And there came a messenger, and told him, saying, They have brought the heads of the king's sons. And he said, Lay ye them *in* two heaps *at* the entering in of the gate
9 until the morning. And it came to pass in the morning, that he went out, and stood, and said to all the people, Ye *be* righteous: behold, I conspired against my master, and

Now the king's sons, &c.] This parenthetic sentence is inserted to show how easy it was, when they were all of one mind, for the tutors to slay the whole family at a blow.

7. *and slew seventy persons*] R.V. **and slew them, even seventy persons.** Though the pronoun is not expressed in the original, it is needed for the sense. The A.V. might signify any seventy persons.

in baskets] The word is that which is used (Jer. xxiv. 2) for the baskets in which the figs were gathered.

sent him them *to Jezreel*] R.V. **sent them unto him.** Before they come themselves, they take care that the price, by which they expect to purchase Jehu's favour, shall be paid down. The change in R.V. from the English idiom to a more close representation of the Hebrew seems altogether unnecessary.

8. *And there came a messenger, and told him*] Josephus (*Ant.* IX. 6. 5) adds to the picture, and says that the message was received by Jehu, 'While he was at a meal with his friends'.

Lay ye them in *two heaps*] Josephus here says 'one on one side and the other on the other'. No doubt the place was chosen as one of most public resort, and where Jehu meant to come forth as their new king and take his seat next day. As the heads lay there, they would proclaim to the men of Jezreel, how completely Jehu's conduct was accepted in Samaria. Thus without a further blow he secured the submission of the two chief cities.

until the morning] They had arrived in the evening of the day when they were cut off.

9. *he went out, and stood*] At the gate, the place of concourse, where the people usually gathered, and whither recent events would bring them in full number. Jehu in this way began to play the king.

Ye be *righteous*] He is about to make an appeal to the people. He therefore puts them first of all in a good frame of mind towards himself, by acknowledging them to be fit to be arbiters in the case which he is going to put before them. He admits at once that he is as Jezebel had called him 'the murderer of his master' (ix. 31), but before them they see the heads of the whole of Ahab's sons, slain by the rulers

slew him: but who slew all these? Know now that there 10
shall fall unto the earth nothing of the word of the LORD,
which the LORD spake concerning the house of Ahab: for
the LORD hath done *that* which he spake by his servant
Elijah. So Jehu slew all that remained of the house of 11
Ahab in Jezreel, and all his great *men*, and his kinsfolks,
and his priests, until *he* left him none remaining.

And he arose and departed, and came *to* Samaria. *And* 12
as he *was at* the shearing house in the way, Jehu met with 13

of Samaria. 'Who smote all these?' he asks, feeling confident that his act will fade into insignificance before the enormity of their greater butchery. And he was not disappointed.

who slew [R.V. **smote**] *all these?*] The verb is not the same as in the previous clause, and the same change is needed in verses 11 and 17.

10. *Know now that there shall fall unto the earth nothing of the word of the Lord*] Thus Jehu constitutes himself, in the eyes of the people, the instrument by which the Lord is to avenge the evil doings of the house of Ahab. He also leads them to expect that there is more vengeance yet in store. On the phrase 'to fall to the earth' or 'to the ground' signifying 'to be unfulfilled' or 'ineffective', cf. 1 Sam. iii. 19.

11. *and his kinsfolks*] R.V. **familiar friends.** The word indicates those who were well known to him, [LXX. γνωστοὺς] and contains no notion of kinship. It is rendered, by A.V. 'familiar friends' in Job xix. 14, and 'acquaintance' in Ps. xxxi. 11 and in several other places. The final *s* in *kinsfolks* makes the form unusual in English.

and his priests] On this word, which is most frequently rendered 'priests', see note on 1 Kings iv. 2, where it is pointed out that 'chief ruler' or 'principal officer' appears sometimes to be its meaning. That sense appears more appropriate here, where the family and the acquaintances of Ahab's family are spoken of. The priests of Ahab, who would be the Baal-priests, would be included in the wholesale destruction of the Baal-worship described later on in this chapter.

12—17. ON HIS WAY TO SAMARIA JEHU SLAYS THE BRETHREN OF AHAZIAH, KING OF JUDAH. HE TAKES JEHONADAB TO BE THE WITNESS OF HIS ZEAL FOR JEHOVAH. (Not in Chronicles.)

12. *And he arose and departed, and came* [R.V. **went**] to *Samaria*] Beside being the more strictly correct rendering of the verb, the change in R.V. represents the order of events. Jehu is now starting for Samaria. On the way and before he *came* thither he met Jehonadab, and invited him to be his companion. The LXX. does not represent 'and departed'.

the shearing house] R.V. **the shearing-house of the shepherds.** The original is a more full expression here than in verse 14 below.

the brethren of Ahaziah king of Judah, and said, Who *are* ye? And they answered, We *are* the brethren of Ahaziah; and we go down to salute the children of the king and the
14 children of the queen. And he said, Take them alive. And they took them alive, and slew them at the pit of the shearing house, *even* two and forty men; neither left
15 he any of them. And when he was departed thence, he lighted on Jehonadab the son of Rechab *coming* to meet

So the additional words are needed. The phrase is explained as 'the house of binding of the shepherds' i.e. the place where the sheep were bound preparatory to being shorn. The R. V. margin has 'house of gathering', as the sheep were gathered together before the shearing began. There was probably close by some place suited for travellers to halt in, as it clearly lay along a high road. Thus we can understand how Jehu found the cavalcade of Ahab's kindred stopping there.

13. *the brethren of Ahaziah*] And so part of Ahab's kinsfolk, of whom Jehu was commissioned to leave none remaining.

the children of the king] i.e. Of Joram. They manifestly knew nothing of what had happened in the last few days in Jezreel.

the children of the queen] The original is the word employed elsewhere for the 'queen-mother'. Cf. 1 Kings xv. 13. So here the word must have reference to Jezebel, whose influence in Israel was very great. The LXX. notes the word by rendering it ἡ δυναστεύουσα.

14. *Take them alive*] i.e. Make them prisoners. Perhaps for a moment he was uncertain what he should do with them, however being of Ahab's lineage they must share the fate of the rest of that house.

And they took them alive] The LXX. has nothing to represent these words. The 'pit' (R.V. margin, **cistern**) was the great pond or pool in which the sheep were washed before shearing.

15. *Jehonadab the son of Rechab*] We are told (1 Chron. ii. 55) that the house of Rechab belonged to the Kenites. The marriage of Moses to a Kenite wife (Judg. i. 16) led to the Kenites going up with the children of Judah into the wilderness, and so they came to dwell among the people of Israel. We read of them several times in the history of Israel. Jael, who slew Sisera, was the wife of Heber the Kenite (Judg. iv. 17), and Saul shewed kindness to the Kenites when he was sent to destroy Amalek (1 Sam. xv. 6). Of Jehonadab (the name is also written *Jonadab*) we learn (Jer. xxxv. 6—7) that he forbade his descendants to drink wine, or to live in cities, and follow settled occupations. They were always to lead a nomad life; we find too that this ordinance of Jonadab had been observed down to the days of Jeremiah. It is clear therefore that he, who was able to lay it down, and cause it to be kept, must have been a man of much influence, and one whose friendship and countenance might serve Jehu's cause at the outset of his reign. We see also that Jonadab was thoroughly at one with Jehu in the destruction of Baal-worship. We

him: and he saluted him, and said to him, Is thine heart right, as my heart *is* with thy heart? And Jehonadab answered, It is. If it be, give *me* thine hand. And he gave *him* his hand; and he took him up to him into the chariot. And he said, Come with me, and see my zeal 16
for the LORD. So they made him ride in his chariot. And 17
when he came *to* Samaria, he slew all that remained unto

may therefore count his kinsmen as among the more faithful portion of the people of Israel. With the double form, Jonadab and Jehonadab, compare Johanan and Jehohanan, Joiada and Jehoiada, Joram and Jehoram.

Josephus (*Ant.* IX. 6. 6) describes Jonadab as 'a good man and a just, who had been long a friend of Jehu, and who greeted him and began to applaud all that he had done according to God's will for the destruction of the house of Ahab'.

Is thine heart right] Here the LXX. adds 'with my heart', and later in the verse after Jonadab's answer 'It is' there is inserted in the LXX. 'And Jehu said'. These insertions make the dialogue more distinct, but there is no need to suppose that anything has fallen out from the Hebrew text in either place.

If it be] The Hebrew is literally 'and it is'. But this form is often employed as equivalent to 'if it is'. Cf. Judg. vi. 13, where 'if the Lord be with us' is literally 'and the Lord is with us'. See also Driver, *Heb. Tenses*, 149.

into the chariot] For a great personage to cause another to ride with him in his chariot was a mark of distinction. Cf. 1 Kings xx. 33. It is noteworthy that Jehu appears to have attached much importance to Jonadab's support and sympathy. He must therefore have considered that the people of Samaria would be influenced thereby, and if they were likely to be so influenced we may judge that many in Israel regarded a servant of Jehovah with a respect which even the Baal-worship and calf-worship had not been able to destroy.

16. *see my zeal for the Lord*] This was the boast of a man who did not know his own heart. He had some zeal and manifested it in the destruction of Baal, but stopped short at the suppression of the calves in Dan and Bethel. Josephus makes Jehu invite Jonadab to be witness 'how he will spare no wicked man, but will destroy both the false prophets and the false priests and those who lead the multitude astray so that they leave the worship of the Most High, and adore strange gods: for it is a most honest and pleasing sight for a good and righteous man to see the wicked being punished'.

17. *all that remained unto Ahab in Samaria*] i.e. Others more remotely connected with the royal family than the direct descendants. The great men in Samaria having slain the sons of Ahab, must be content to side with their new ruler in clearing off all that remained of his connexions, for otherwise vengeance might have awaked against themselves.

Ahab in Samaria, till *he* had destroyed him, according to the saying of the LORD, which he spake to Elijah.

18 And Jehu gathered all the people together, and said unto them, Ahab served Baal a little; *but* Jehu shall serve him
19 much. Now therefore call unto me all the prophets of Baal, all his servants, and all his priests; let none be wanting: for I have a great sacrifice *to do* to Baal; whosoever shall be wanting, he shall not live. But Jehu did *it* in subtilty, to the intent that *he* might destroy the worship-
20 pers of Baal. And Jehu said, Proclaim a solemn assembly

according to the saying [R.V. **word**] *of the Lord*] This is the more usual expression, but R.V. has left '*saying* of the Lord' in 1 Kings xv. 29.

18—31. JEHU BY SUBTILTY DESTROYS THE WORSHIPPERS OF BAAL AND THE HOUSE OF BAAL. HE WALKS IN THE WAYS OF JEROBOAM. (Not in Chronicles.)

18. *Ahab served Baal a little*] Hitherto Jehu's action had been directed only against the family of Ahab, and the people had no reason to suppose that a religious reform was in the new king's thoughts. We may judge from the ready acceptance of the announcement in this verse, that Jehu had been no different from the rest, and had gone in the way where Ahab and Jezebel led. Josephus represents him as saying that he would have *twice as many* gods as Ahab had.

19. *call unto me all the prophets of Baal*] The LXX. represents Jehu's words as an address to the prophets of Baal, 'Now, O ye prophets of Baal, call ye unto me all his servants &c.'

all his servants] R.V. **worshippers**. As the same word is so translated at the close of this verse, and again in 21, 22, and 23, there can be no warrant for a change in this place. R.V. makes the whole consistent.

all his priests] These were not the same as the prophets. The latter gave oracles to enquirers and taught the mysteries of the worship, the priests attended on the numerous sacrifices.

Jehu did it *in subtilty*] The word in the original is one connected with the same root as the name Jacob, a name interpreted by Esau to signify 'supplanter'. Such an action as his implies a certain degree of guile, and hence the sense in this verse.

20. *Proclaim* [R.V. **Sanctify**] *a solemn assembly*] The verb is not the same which is correctly rendered 'they proclaimed' in the next clause. It is constantly rendered 'Sanctify' elsewhere. Cf. Exod. xiii. 12; Josh. vii. 13; Joel i. 14; ii. 15, 16; and is the word used of making a *holy* war. See Jer. vi. 4; li. 27, 28, &c., where 'prepare' is the appropriate translation. 'Proclaim' is found as the equivalent nowhere but here.

a solemn assembly] The word (with a slightly different pointing) is used in Lev. xxiii. 36; Numb. xxix. 35; Deut. xvi. 8; Neh. viii. 18, of the solemn gatherings of God's people for their sacred worship. Jehu by using such a term seems to be putting Baal entirely on a level

for Baal. And they proclaimed *it.* And Jehu sent through 21
all Israel: and all the worshippers of Baal came, so that there was not a man left that came not. And they came *into* the house of Baal; and the house of Baal was full from one end to another. And he said unto *him* that *was* over 22
the vestry, Bring forth vestments for all the worshippers of

with Jehovah, a proceeding that went, as he professed to do, beyond all Ahab's practices.

21. *And Jehu sent through all Israel*] Here the LXX. adds the words of the notice; 'saying, And now all ye worshippers, and all his priests and all his prophets, let no one be absent, for I am about to make a great sacrifice: whosoever shall be absent, he shall not live'. Similarly after 'And all the worshippers of Baal came' there is inserted 'and all his priests and all his prophets'. These amplifications are no evidence that the Hebrew text ever had more than now stands in it. The LXX. often exhibits a desire to round off a narrative in a way very unlike Hebrew.

not a man left that came not] They had been largely encouraged in previous reigns, but now they were to be elevated above all others. Hence all that desired to be popular with the new king and could establish their claim to be counted Baalites, would reckon it a good chance, and come without fail.

the house of Baal] 'House' is the constant word for 'temple' in the Old Testament, and no doubt this building was as magnificent as the architectural skill of Tyrian workmen, and the zeal of the house of Ahab, with whom architecture seems to have been a passion, could make it. Hence it would be large enough to contain in its spacious courts an immense number of worshippers. For 'house' used of Solomon's temple, see 1 Kings viii. 13, 16, 17, 18, 19, and constantly in the history of David and Solomon.

from one end to another] The Hebrew phrase is 'mouth to mouth' but there is no need to understand, with margin of A. V. 'so full that they stood mouth to mouth' which they only could have done in pairs. As in other languages, 'mouth' is used in Hebrew for any opening, as of a sack (Gen. xlii. 27), of a cave (Josh. x. 18, 22, 27), and so any doorway or entrance. Hence here 'from one entrance to the other'. Almost the same phrase is used Ezra ix. 11 (as will be seen from margin of A. V.), of a land filled 'from one end to the other'.

22. *he said unto* him *that* was *over the vestry*] The vestry must have belonged to the house of Baal; we cannot suppose that the king's wardrobe-keeper had a stock of robes to supply such a multitude of worshippers. Probably because of the control which had been exercised there by the house of Ahab, Jehu could give orders in Baal's temple and have them obeyed. It appears from the narrative that vestments were not used only by the priests, but by all the worshippers as well. Perhaps there was some distinction between the character and material of the robes.

23 Baal. And he brought them forth vestments. And Jehu went, and Jehonadab the son of Rechab, *into* the house of Baal, and said unto the worshippers of Baal, Search, and look that there be here with you none of the servants of 24 the LORD, but the worshippers of Baal only. And when they went in to offer sacrifices and burnt offerings, Jehu appointed fourscore men without, and said, *If* any of the men whom I *have* brought into your hands escape, *he that* 25 *letteth him go*, his life *shall be* for the life of him. And it came to pass, as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering, that Jehu said to the guard and to the

23. *Search, and look*, &c.] Not only did he manifest anxiety that all the Baal-worshippers should be present, but that none of the rest of the people should be included in the destruction. As the worshippers would be full of the thought that they were to become possessed of special privileges in the new reign, they were sure to be the best agents in excluding any who could not shew that he had belonged to Baal's congregation before. Josephus strangely says 'When he had come into the house with his friend Jonadab he gave commandment to search lest any *alien* or *stranger* should be among them. For he did not wish a *foreigner* to take part in their sacrifices'.

24. *And when they went in*] R. V. omits 'when', and makes this clause an independent sentence. The LXX. has 'and he went in' (καὶ εἰσῆλθε).

Jehu appointed] In consequence of what has been done in the previous clause, R.V. renders '**Now** Jehu **had** appointed'. And as there is in the sentence a pronoun and preposition of which the A. V. takes no account, R. V. adds **him** = for himself, after 'appointed'.

If *any of the men whom I* have *brought*] R.V. **I bring.** The sentence is very elliptical as will be seen from the italics of A.V. But the same words only are represented in LXX. For the phrase cf. 1 Kings xx. 39, 42.

25. *as soon as he had made an end of offering*] That is, when the priests had completed the offering. We are not to suppose that Jehu himself acted as priest on the occasion, only as he had been the convoker of the solemn assembly, the whole ceremony is referred to him.

Jehu said to the guard] The 'guard' is that body of 'runners' which appears in the history as soon as a king was appointed, and which played a part in all state parade. Thus both Adonijah and Absalom provided them with 'fifty men to run before them' when they aspired to the throne (2 Sam. xv. 1; 1 Kings i. 5). They are first spoken of in 1 Sam. xxii. 17, where the text of A.V. gives 'footmen' (R.V. **guard**) with 'runners' or 'guard' in the margin. Such men must necessarily be of great physical strength, and so well suited to do Jehu's work on this occasion.

cast them *out*] There is no pronoun expressed in the Hebrew. And

captains, Go in, *and* slay them; let none come forth. And they smote them with the edge of the sword; and the guard and the captains cast *them* out, and went to the city of the house of Baal. And they brought forth the images out 26
of the house of Baal, and burnt them. And they brake 27
down the image of Baal, and brake down the house of Baal, and made it a draught house unto *this* day. Thus 28

it is not easy to see why the dead bodies should have been cast out of a place which they wished to be thoroughly defiled. Hence it has been thought that the 'casting' here spoken of refers only to the throwing aside the dead to make their way through the courts towards the central portion of the building, where probably the more important sacrificing priests were stationed.

and went to the city of the house of Baal] The word rendered 'city' is applied to smaller enclosures than we usually understand by it now, and seems here to indicate some principal part of the temple edifice. In illustration of the use of this word for some small place, see Numb. xiii. 19, 'What *cities* they be that they dwell in, whether in tents or in strongholds'. So too the desolate daughter of Zion is compared (Is. i. 8) to 'a cottage in a vineyard, a lodge in a garden of cucumbers', and then, in parallelism with these figures, to 'a besieged *city*'. In such passages also as Gen. iv. 17 *city* can only signify some solid substantial dwelling-place in distinction to the tents of the nomad population.

For a similar change of sense we may compare our English word 'town', which in the earliest English *tûn* (and in Icelandic still) signifies an enclosure, generally a farm-stead with the necessary out-buildings surrounded by one fence.

26. *And they brought forth the images*] R.V. **pillars.** On this word see above, iii. 2 note. The same change is also made by R.V. in the next verse. The LXX. has the singular in this verse (στήλην) and the plural in 27. As the worship of Astarte was combined with that of Baal, we can understand that in such a splendid temple as that which Ahab and Jezebel had erected, there would be more pillars (or sacred obelisks) than one, though one would be specially known as 'the pillar of Baal'.

and burnt them] So that these more numerous pillars must have been of wood. Probably they were of less size than the chief obelisk.

27. *they brake down the image of Baal*] As the verb is the same as that used immediately afterwards for the breaking down of the house, we may be almost certain that this chief object of worship was of stone. The verb is constantly employed of pulling down buildings. The LXX. omits the next clause, 'And brake down the house of Baal'.

a draught house] The word 'draught' is found again in Matth. xv. 17; Mark vii. 19. Cf. also Burton, *Anatomy*, p. 165, 'Muck hills, *draughts*, sinks, where any carcasses or carrion lies'. For the idea cf. Ezra vi. 11; Dan. ii. 5; iii. 29, 'their houses shall be made a dunghill'.

unto this *day*] See above on viii. 22. For the commands in the

29 Jehu destroyed Baal out of Israel. Howbeit *from* the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, Jehu departed not from after them, *to wit*, the golden calves that
30 *were in* Beth-el, and that *were* in Dan. And the LORD said unto Jehu, Because thou hast done well in executing *that* which *is* right in mine eyes, *and* hast done unto the house of Ahab according to all that *was* in mine heart, thy children of the fourth *generation* shall sit on the throne of Israel.
31 But Jehu took no heed to walk in the law of the LORD God of Israel with all his heart: *for* he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam, which made Israel to sin.
32 In those days the LORD began to cut Israel short: and

law to destroy the objects of heathen worship cf. Deut, vii. 5, 25, xii. 2, 3, where a destruction like that described here is enjoined.

28. *Jehu destroyed Baal out of Israel*] The false worship had not taken such root in the land that it could ever revive again. Probably no buildings were reared to Baal except in the cities where the royal family dwelt. Hence when they were cut off, it would have no fosterers.

29. *who* [R.V. **wherewith he**] *made Israel to sin*] See above on ii. 3. The same change is to be made in verse 31.

golden calves that were] From 1 Kings xii. 28, 29, we see that only *one* image was in each place.

30. *Because thou hast done well*] i. e. To a certain extent. When David strives to do God's will perfectly with a true heart, the promise is that 'he shall not be without a lamp before God for ever'. The partial obedience of Jehu obtains the gift of a succession for four generations.

thy children [R.V. **sons**] *of the fourth* generation] For the fulfilment see chap. xv. 12. The son of Jehu was Jehoahaz who was succeeded by his son Joash, and he by Jeroboam II., with whose son Zechariah the fourth generation and the sovereignty of Jehu's family terminated.

31. *with all his heart*] He only went partially on the right way, and probably personal ambition had much to do with his zeal against Baal. With the calves it was another matter. They formed, as it were, the emblems of Israel's independence, and so the king's feeling would be enlisted on their side.

32—36. CUTTING SHORT OF ISRAEL. JEHU'S DEATH, HIS SUCCESSOR AND THE DURATION OF HIS REIGN. (Not in Chronicles.)

32. *to cut Israel short*] Literally 'to cut off *in* Israel'. The meaning is 'to give over some parts of their land into the enemy's hand'. This, it is said, should rather be expressed by 'to cut off *from* Israel'. But, as it stands, the context makes all clear enough. What had been

Hazael smote them in all the coasts of Israel; from Jordan 33
eastward, all the land of Gilead, the Gadites, and the Reubenites, and the Manassites, from Aroer, which *is* by the river Arnon, even Gilead and Bashan. Now the rest of the 34
acts of Jehu, and all that he did, and all his might, *are* they

part of Israel's possessions, was severed from it, and passed into the power of Hazael and the Syrians.

in all the coasts of Israel] In the days when the A.V. was made, 'coast' meant 'any border land' and had no necessary relation to the sea. The 'coasts' described in the next verse are all on the east of Jordan, and entirely away from the Mediterranean. Hazael must have thoroughly overrun and taken possession of the trans-Jordanic part of Israel.

33. *Gilead*] This country lay between Bashan on the north, and Moab and Ammon on the south. It was of a mountainous character, and was chosen by the tribes of Reuben, Gad and Manasseh because it was so well adapted for the pasturage of their numerous flocks. These tribes were all included at this time in Hazael's conquest, and so the phrase 'cut Israel short' was fully borne out, for one quarter of the whole ten tribes was thus taken from her.

Aroer] This city was on the south boundary of the tribe of Reuben, which was the southernmost of the three trans-Jordanic tribes. Thus it marks the extreme limit in that direction of the conquests here mentioned, while Bashan marks that on the north. Nothing was left to Israel, east of the Jordan, for Bashan was the northern part of the land assigned to the half tribe of Manasseh.

Arnon] This torrent bed, full of water in the rainy season, but dry in summer, after the character of all the clefts in the east of Jordan, is wrongly described by 'river' of A.V. In R.V. it is rendered **valley of** Arnon. It formed the border between Israel and Moab.

Bashan] This district, which like Gilead was mountainous, lay between Gilead and Mt Hermon. It was well wooded also. 'The oaks of Bashan' are frequently mentioned, and so are the cattle, the 'fat bulls of Bashan'. The loss of such a district must have been very fatal to Israel. After this notice Bashan, which in the early days is often spoken of in connexion with Og, the king whom the Israelites vanquished on entering the land, disappears from the Bible history. Hazael's conquest was never recovered.

34. *the acts of Jehu*] Jehu is one of the kings of whom we learn something from the cuneiform inscriptions. There we are told that he was the ally of Assyria. Hence he was the enemy of Hazael who was frequently at war with the Assyrians. To Assyria Jehu appears to have been a tributary ally, for his tribute is twice mentioned in the records of Salmanasar II. It is noteworthy that in both places he is spoken of as Jehu *the son of Omri*. The family of Omri, from their magnificence, and their alliance with Tyre and Sidon, must have exercised a great influence among the neighbouring powers, and their

not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of
35 Israel? And Jehu slept with his fathers: and they buried
him in Samaria. And Jehoahaz his son reigned in his
36 stead. And the time that Jehu reigned over Israel in
Samaria *was* twenty and eight years.

11 And when Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her
son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the seed royal.
2 But Jehosheba, the daughter of king Joram, sister of

name would thus be employed to designate the family on the throne of Israel without regard to whether they were descendants of Omri or not. (See Schrader, *Keilinschriften u. das A. T.* p. 105 seqq., Engl. Translation, vol. i. p. 199 seqq.)

and all his might] Though Jehu's reign marks the commencement of the decay of Israel, and is specially noteworthy for the loss of territory, yet Jehu himself appears to have made his mark as a warrior. The LXX. expands the word 'might' and says 'all his dynasty and the conspiracies which he formed'.

35. *Jehoahaz his son*] We are told (chap. xiii. 1) that Jehu's death, and the accession of Jehoahaz, was in the three and twentieth year of Joash, king of Judah. As Jehu reigned twenty-eight years he must have been on the throne about *five* or *six* years when Joash was made king. In chapter xii. 1 the accession of Joash is placed in the *seventh* year of Jehu, but from the way in which the Jews reckoned the regnal years of their kings there need be no contradiction between these statements.

CH. XI. **1—3.** ATHALIAH, HAVING SLAIN ALL THE SEED ROYAL OF JUDAH, EXCEPT JOASH, USURPS THE THRONE FOR SIX YEARS. (2 Chron. xxii. 10—12.)

1. *And* [R.V. **Now**] *when Athaliah*] Athaliah was the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, and became the wife of Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat.

she arose and destroyed] The verb here rendered 'arose' is often joined with another verb to give the notion of 'setting earnestly about' any business. Thus in Exod. xxxii. 1 it is used '*Up* make us gods', and in 1 Kings xiv. 2 '*Arise* and disguise thyself', also 1 Chron. xxii. 19 '*Arise* therefore and build ye the sanctuary'. See too Gen. xxxvii. 35 'And all his sons and all his daughters *rose up* to comfort him'.

all the seed royal] i.e. All those that remained after the destruction wrought by Jehu on the brethren of Ahaziah (see above x. 14). Judah, as well as Israel, seems at this date to have had no lack of families in the royal houses. Those whom Athaliah slew were of course the male members of the royal family.

2. *But Jehosheba*] Called in 2 Chron. xxii. 11 Jehoshabeath. She was only half sister to Ahaziah, and not the daughter of Athaliah. Josephus says she was Ὀχοζίᾳ ὁμοπάτριος ἀδελφή. In Chronicles we learn that she was the wife of Jehoiada the priest, which explains the

Ahaziah, took Joash the son of Ahaziah, and stale him from among the king's sons which were slain; and they hid him, *even* him and his nurse, in the bedchamber from Athaliah, so that he was not slain. And he was with her hid *in* the 3
house of the LORD six years. And Athaliah *did* reign over the land.

And the seventh year Jehoiada sent and fet the rulers 4

ease with which she could arrange for hiding the child she had saved in the house of the Lord.

took Joash] He must have been a mere babe at the time, not a year old. Cf. *vv.* 3 and 21.

and stale him from among the king's sons which [R.V. **that**] *were slain*] The slight change conforms the sentence to Chronicles, where the words are exactly the same. To make the two passages alike, as in the Hebrew, R.V. reads the rest of the sentence thus **even him and his nurse, *and put them* in the bed chamber, and they hid him from Athaliah, so** &c.'

the bedchamber] A chamber where beds were stowed away. Josephus says τὸ ταμιεῖον τῶν κλινῶν, the storeroom for beds and couches. The fury of Athaliah would leave no sleeping room unsearched, but in such a place it was possible for nurse and child to lie hid till there was a chance of getting into more secure shelter.

3. *And he was with her*] i.e. With his nurse, who continued to tend him after he had grown somewhat older.

in *the house of the Lord*] We learn from the description of Solomon's temple (see note on 1 Kings vi. 5) that it was surrounded on two sides and one end with three stories of chambers. It is not said to what use they were put, but we may safely conclude that they were under the control of the high-priest, and that, for such a purpose as is here described, he would have no scruple about using them, even if on ordinary occasions no one dwelt in them.

six years] Perhaps Athaliah was not aware that any one of the royal children had been saved. She gave order for their destruction, and her agents did all they could to carry out her design. Perhaps when they could not find Joash some other slain babe was substituted, and Athaliah would know no difference. The house of the Lord was not a place in which she herself was likely to be interested, and if the rooms around it were never as a rule used for dwelling-rooms suspicion would not be directed to them, and so they would go unsearched.

And Athaliah did *reign*] R.V. **reigned.** As in Chronicles.

4—16. JEHOIADA THE PRIEST MAKES JOASH KING, AND ATHALIAH IS PUT TO DEATH. (2 Chron. xxiii. 1—15.)

4. *And the* [R.V. **in the**] *seventh year*] So Chronicles. Jehoiada's name is introduced very abruptly and without any specification of his office till we come to verse 9. This points to an early date for the document from which the compiler of Kings made his extracts. It is

over hundreds, with the captains and the guard, and brought them to him *into* the house of the LORD, and made a covenant with them, and took an oath of them in the house of
5 the LORD, and shewed them the king's son. And he com-

only when the events are somewhat recent that the names of important actors in them can be introduced without some description.

fet the rulers [R.V. **captains**] *over hundreds*] The change in R.V. makes the passage conform to Deut. i. 15 where the various subdivisions of the officers are mentioned. For other allusions thereto cf. Exod. xviii. 21, 25, and when the more military character had been introduced 1 Sam. viii. 12; xxii. 7; 2 Sam. xviii. 1. In the parallel passage A.V. has 'captains' 2 Chron. xxiii. 1. *Fet* is the constant preterite of 'fetch' in the English of A.V. For similar instances of dropping the 'ch' of the present, compare the preterites of *catch* and *search*, which, as far as sound is concerned, might be written *caut* and *saut*.

with the captains and the guard] R.V. **of the Carites and of the guard.** Here both nouns are in a construction which shews that the captains over hundreds belonged to both the classes of men here mentioned. Hence, as the word rendered 'guard' is literally 'runners' and applies to the royal body-guard, so the 'Carites' are thought to be a similar class. The word only occurs in this chapter verses 4 and 19 and in 2 Sam. xx. 23, where the *Keri* (marginal reading) substitutes 'Cherethites'. As in that passage the Carites, or Cherethites, and Pelethites formed David's guard, so at this time there appear to have been similar body-guards attached to the palace in Jerusalem. The word may be derived from a verb which marks them as 'executioners', which office was performed, as we see from many instances, by those in immediate attendance on the king.

These officers were strictly military, and it is worth notice that the compiler in Chronicles, who is usually thought to lay most stress on, and give most importance to, what was done by the priests and Levites, yet at this point is very careful to notice the names of these five soldiers 'Azariah the son of Jeroham, and Ishmael the son of Jehohanan, and Azariah the son of Obed, and Maaseiah the son of Adaiah, and Elishaphat the son of Zichri', while he gives no such prominence to the names of any of the priests or Levites, except the chief actor Jehoiada.

into *the house of the Lord*] We can see from such passages as Jer. xxxv. 2, where the prophet is bidden to bring the Rechabites 'into the house of the Lord, into one of the chambers' that the rooms by which the temple was surrounded were used for meetings such as the one here described.

and made a covenant with them] In 2 Chronicles we are told how these officers were first employed: 'They went about in Judah and gathered the Levites out of all the cities of Judah and the chief of the fathers of Israel (R.V. **heads of fathers'** *houses* **in Israel**), and they came to Jerusalem. Jehoiada sent them to the persons with whom, by reason of his office, he would have the greatest influence, but the operations were ultimately to be under the command of the captains of the guard.

manded them, saying, This *is* the thing that ye shall do; A third *part* of you that enter in on the sabbath shall even be keepers of the watch of the king's house; and a third *part* 6
shall be at the gate of Sur; and a third *part* at the gate

5. *And he commanded them*] The two things to be provided for were the safety of the young king's person when it should be known to Athaliah and her party that he was alive, and the guarding of the royal palace, so that no personal troop of Athaliah's might make an attack on the king's party, and at the proper moment the palace might be seized and the king brought to it and set on the throne. These duties Jehoiada deputed to the five captains whom he had taken into his confidence. Three bodies of men, presumably each under a captain, are to watch the palace at different points, while two other bodies are to be in charge of the house of the Lord about the king. It is not without interest to observe that this fivefold division of the guards corresponds to the number of the captains selected, though they and their number are only mentioned in the narrative of 2 Chronicles. We see from this, that although we may not, at this distance of time, be able to make clear every detail of the two stories, they fit here very remarkably into each other.

a third part *of you that enter* [R.V. **come**] *in on the sabbath*] Those who are to take part in the work that is planned are to be the guards who enter on their duty on the Sabbath, and those who are going off duty. As the words are addressed to the captains over hundreds the 'of you' must apply to the soldiers under their command. But it is perfectly intelligible that a somewhat similar arrangement of the Levites might also be made, and that they should take their part in work of restoring the king. From the narrative in 2 Chronicles we see that the priests and Levites were arranged in 3 divisions, one of which was to have the duty of porters, as it seems, at the doors of the temple, another to be at the king's house, and the third at the gate of the foundation. On this last position see below. Thus, as in the case of the purely military arrangement, the larger number of the priestly and Levitical body was to serve near the royal palace. We note also from Chronicles that the occasion of some feast was arranged as the time for carrying out the plan. For it is said that 'all the people shall be in the courts of the house of the Lord'.

shall even be keepers of the watch of the king's house] R.V. omits 'even'. The LXX. adds 'at the doorway' in the end of this clause. No doubt they would be stationed so as to prevent any one from the palace coming forth, without their consent, to interfere with the proceedings at the temple.

6. *at the gate of Sur*] R.V. omits 'of'. This gate is nowhere else named. The similarity between the original words סור, *Sur* and יסוד given in Chronicles, and rendered 'foundation', makes it not unlikely that the 'gate Sur' here, and 'the gate of the foundation' (2 Chron. xxiii. 5) are the same place, though it is impossible, if this be so, to decide which is the correct reading, for 'the gate of the foundation' is

behind the guard: so shall ye keep the watch of the house,
7 that it be not broken down. And two parts of all you that go
forth on the sabbath, even they shall keep the watch of the
8 house of the LORD about the king. And ye shall compass
the king round about, every man with his weapons in his
hand: and he that cometh within the ranges, let him be
slain: and be ye with the king as he goeth out and as he

spoken of nowhere else. The LXX. has here ἐν τῇ πύλῃ τῶν ὁδῶν, 'in the gate of the ways' and in Chronicles ἐν τῇ πύλῃ τῇ μέσῃ 'at the middle gate'.

at the gate behind the guard] The guard here spoken of are the 'runners' who formed a part of the royal body-guard. Nothing is more likely than that such a body would have special quarters assigned to them in the neighbourhood of the palace, and if they were at this time thought to be favourable to Athaliah, the necessity would be apparent of putting a body of well-affected men close to them to keep them in check.

so shall ye keep the watch of the house] The 'house' is the palace, which was thus to be strongly guarded at three places.

that it be not broken down] R.V. **and be a barrier**. The word is a noun in apposition with 'watch' and defines its character. The word is unrepresented in the LXX.

7. *And two parts of all you that go forth*] R.V. **And the two companies of you, even all that go forth**. All those men who were going off duty at the palace were to divide themselves into two bodies, and go and serve at the temple to protect the king. The 'of you' refers to the purely military body, as in verse 5. We see in verse 11 that their duty was outside the temple building, while the narrative in Chronicles in almost identical language appoints the Levites for duty within the temple.

8. *And ye shall compass the king round about*] Though the pronoun is changed, the same persons are intended, who were to be a body-guard for the young king in every movement at this critical time.

he that cometh within the ranges] R.V. **ranks**. This is the point where the distinction is most marked between the duties to be discharged by the soldiers and by the Levites. In 2 Chron. xxiii. 7 it is said: 'And the Levites shall compass the king round about, every man with his weapons in his hand; and *whosoever cometh into the house*, he shall be put to death'. From this we find that the Levites were to form a guard for the king's person within the temple, while the soldiers discharged the same office in the court, and when he was conducted from the temple to the palace. So the one body is bidden to take summary vengeance on any intruder within the sacred building, the other on any who should break through their ranks to get within the enclosure and so draw near to the king after he had come forth.

as [R.V. **when**] *he goeth out and as* [R.V. **when**] *he cometh in*] This change assimilates the rendering to 2 Chronicles.

cometh in. And the captains over the hundreds did ac- 9
cording to all *things* that Jehoiada the priest commanded:
and they took every man his men that were to come in on
the sabbath, with them that should go out on the sabbath,
and came to Jehoiada the priest. And to the captains over 10
hundreds did the priest give king David's spears and shields,
that *were* in the temple of the LORD. And the guard stood, 11

9. *and the captains over the* [R.V. omits **the**] *hundreds did according to all* things] R.V. omits **things**, for which there is nothing in the original. It is also not in the Hebrew of 2 Chronicles, though there the A.V. prints it without italics. R.V. omits it there also. The Levites must have been in some degree at least, where they were acting as guards about the palace, under the control of these centurions, by whom also according to the narrative in 2 Chron. they had been gathered out of all the cities of Judah.

that Jehoiada the priest commanded] He was the prime mover, and both the Levitical and military guards acted together to carry out his design. The LXX. instead of any rendering of the word for 'priest' has ὁ συνετός. It seems as if the last three consonants of the name Jehoiada (יהוידע) had been read twice over, the second time as if they were the participle of the verb 'to know'.

with them [R.V. **those**] *that should go out*] So both sets of men were engaged; and in the case of the Levites it is said in 2 Chron. xxiii. 8, 'For Jehoiada the priest dismissed not the courses', i.e. did not allow those members of the Levitical courses, whose term of service was then ended, to go away, as on other occasions they were free to do.

10. *And to the captains over hundreds did the priest give*] R.V. **And the priest delivered to the captains over hundreds.** Thus the English is made to correspond to the Hebrew order more closely, and to the translation in 2 Chron. It is to be observed that both accounts agree about the weapons being delivered to the soldiery by Jehoiada, thus making clear that to both compilers it was known that the whole undertaking was controlled by the guard and not by the priests and Levites, though, as his manner is, the writer of Chronicles puts them in the forefront as much as he can.

king David's spears and shields] R.V. **the spears and shields that had been king David's.** This is the form in 2 Chronicles, except that there 'bucklers' are mentioned between 'spears' and 'shields'. These weapons were those which David in his wars had taken from his enemies, and stored probably in the chambers round the temple. For the practice of so devoting the weapons of the conquered cf. the sword of Goliath laid up in store with Ahimelech at Nob (1 Sam. xxi. 9), and the shields which David took from the servants of Hadadezer (2 Sam viii. 7) and carried to Jerusalem.

that were *in the temple* [R.V. **house**] *of the Lord*] It is the same word which is rendered 'house' frequently in this chapter. Of course it means 'temple', but the English reader might suppose that the

every man with his weapons in his hand, round about the king, from the right corner of the temple to the left corner
12 of the temple, *along* by the altar and the temple. And he brought forth the king's son, and put the crown upon him, and *gave him* the Testimony; and they made him king, and anointed him; and they clapt their hands, and said, God

original had here a different word. The same change has to be made in the next verse, three times over; and in the parallel verse in 2 Chron.

11. *And the guard stood*] These are the 'runners', the foot-soldiers, whose duty was on the outside of the temple.

round about the king, &c.] The R.V. changes the order of words here, as well as the rendering, to that which is adopted for the same Hebrew in 2 Chron. They are thus translated, **from the right side of the house to the left side of the house along by the altar and the house, by the king round about.** To understand how these guards were ranged it must be remembered that the altar stood in the court in front of the temple porch. Hence from each corner of the porch, on the right and left, the men were ranged in lines between the temple and the altar, so that when the king came forth he could advance between them, and the lines gradually came towards each other as they neared the altar, so that it can be said of them that they were along by the altar and by the house. The space enclosed by them would be somewhat triangular in form, the base being the width of the temple porch. Into this space Joash was brought forth, and there proclaimed and anointed in the sight of the people who in 2 Chronicles are said to have been gathered in the temple courts.

12. *And he brought forth the king's son*] i.e. Jehoiada did so, who had charge of him. The name 'king's son' is perhaps given to him here rather than his personal name, to mark that the struggle was for the true successor.

and gave him *the Testimony*] The word so rendered occurs first in Exod. xvi. 34, where it is directed that the pot of manna is to be laid up before the *Testimony*. That by this is meant some portion of the Law which was given to Moses is made clear in a later passage. In Exod. xxv. 16, 21 it is described as 'the *Testimony* which I shall give thee'. We need not suppose that in these passages the whole law of Moses is intended, but the name given to the first portion of the Law would no doubt be continued in after times for all that was considered to be the divine revelation. Hence we must here understand the Law, as the people then possessed it. Express direction is given in Deut. xvii. 18, 19, that when a king shall be chosen he shall have a copy of the Law, which he shall study 'that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes to do them'. So the delivery of the Law would naturally form a most solemn portion of the coronation ceremony.

and anointed him] This was not done as far as we know with all kings, but the present was a special occasion, and no part of the

save the king. And when Athaliah heard the noise of the 13
guard *and* of the people, she came to the people *into* the
temple of the LORD. And when she looked, behold, the 14
king stood by a pillar, as the manner *was*, and the princes

ordinance would be omitted which could help to mark in a religious manner the restoration of the true scion of David's house.

and they clapt their hands] A natural expression of approval and applause, though not frequently spoken of in the O. Test. It is found in the Psalms xlvii. 1 of exultation before God, and the figure is used Ps. xcviii. 8 'Let the floods clap their hands'. But it is quite as frequently used where rejoicing over a fallen enemy is the cause (cf. Job xxvii. 23; Lam. ii. 15; Nah. iii. 19).

God save the king] Literally 'Let the king live'. So they cried when Saul was made king, 1 Sam. x. 24, and at the feast of Adonijah when he sought to be king, 1 Kings i. 25.

13. *And when Athaliah heard the noise*] The arrangements had all been made so cautiously that the queen-mother had no knowledge of what was being done. But we may suppose that ere long the report would reach her through her attendants, and so she went, where otherwise she was not wont to go, toward the house of the Lord. Unless she had thought it some matter of grave concern we cannot fancy her going out to put an end by her presence, if possible, to the proceeding. Josephus' account is that 'having heard the tumult and applause unexpectedly, Athaliah was greatly troubled, and hastened with her private troops from the palace: that the priests admitted her into the temple area, but prevented the armed men who were with her from entering'. The Bible narratives do not speak of a guard accompanying Athaliah, but it is not likely that she would go forth on such an errand without one, though the influence of a queen-mother was very powerful.

of the guard and *of the people*] There is no conjunction in the Hebrew, and the guard were the 'runners' spoken of above. The narrative in Chronicles transposes the two words, and the rendering there is 'of the people running', but probably the conjunction is wanting in both cases through the error of the scribe. So in 2 Chron. xxiii. 11 the R.V. has put on the margin 'of the people, of the guard and of those who praised the king'.

she came to the people into *the temple* [R.V. **house**] *of the Lord*] The assembly was a notable one and seems to have been at the time of some feast which had brought a more than usually great concourse to Jerusalem.

14. *And when she looked, behold, the king*] R.V. **And she looked and behold the king**. This, the literal translation of the Hebrew, is the form adopted in 2 Chron. The original is the same in both places.

stood by a [R.V. **the**] *pillar*] By this word is clearly designated some spot which was the special position of the king on such occasions. We see that Athaliah took in the whole scene at a glance and knew without telling what was going on. The word 'pillar' is the same which is used for the two, Jachin and Boaz (1 Kings vii. 21), which stood as

and the trumpeters by the king, and all the people of the land rejoiced, and blew with trumpets: and Athaliah rent
15 her clothes, and cried, Treason, Treason. But Jehoiada the priest commanded the captains of the hundreds, the officers of the host, and said unto them, Have her forth without the ranges: and him that followeth her kill with the

ornamental pillars in the porch of the temple, and which being ornamental could doubtless be seen by all in the court. If we suppose one of these set apart as the station of the king at his coronation, the position would be admirably suited for the purpose. Otherwise we must understand some special erection in the court of the temple, of which there is no mention till this passage, and afterwards in chap. xxiii. 3. The situation of the pillar is described in 2 Chron. xxiii. 13 as 'at the entering in', words which would not unfitly describe the position of the two pillars erected in the temple porch.

as the manner was] Hence it was a well-known spot appropriated to such occasions.

and the princes and the trumpeters] R.V. **the captains and the trumpets.** The 'captains' were those 'over hundreds' mentioned before. 'Trumpets' of course implies 'trumpeters' but the word is literally translated in 2 Chron., and the two places should agree. The persons who blew with the trumpets were probably the Levites, for in chap. xii. 13, 'trumpets' are recounted as among the furniture of the temple, and these would be used only by priests or Levites. In 2 Chron. vii. 6; xiii. 14 we have the priests sounding trumpets.

and all the people of the land rejoiced] Shewing that there was a numerous convocation. The gathering would be larger than usual because the Sabbath had been chosen for these operations.

and [R.V. **Then**] *Athaliah rent her clothes*] Seeing with horror that priests and soldiery and the assembled people were all of one mind, and against her.

15. *But* [R.V. **And**] *Jehoiada the priest commanded the captains of the* [R.V. omits *the*] *hundreds, the officers of the host*] R.V. **that were set over the host.** The changes bring the version into close agreement with 2 Chron. By the 'host' is meant the combined body who had been gathered by Jehoiada, and put under the direction of the five captains.

Have her forth without the ranges] R.V. **between the ranks.** That the meaning is 'within' and not 'without' the ranks is manifest from Lev. xvi. 15 where the same prepositional form is found and cannot be otherwise translated than 'within'. The object of Jehoiada's order is plain. He would keep Athaliah surrounded by his own guards, but get her removed beyond the precincts of the temple. This harmonizes with the order recorded at the end of this verse, that she should not be slain in the house of the Lord.

and him that followeth her kill [R.V. **slay**] *with the sword*] The verb is the same as in the next clause. The persons who might perhaps be expected to follow her, when she was led away guarded from the

sword. For the priest had said, Let her not be slain *in* the house of the LORD. And they laid hands on her; and she 16
went *by* the way by the which the horses came *into* the king's house: and there was she slain.

And Jehoiada made a covenant between the LORD and 17
the king and the people, that *they* should be the LORD'S people; between the king also and the people. And all the 18
people of the land went *into* the house of Baal, and brake it

temple, would be those of her own attendants, who had not been allowed to come between the lines of the guard, yet now might think it their duty to try and rescue their mistress.

16. *And they laid hands on her*] R.V. **So they made way for her.** The rendering of the A.V. agrees with the LXX. and the Vulgate. But the verb here used is not that employed for such an act as the arrest here described would be. It is better therefore to adopt the translation of the Targum followed by Jewish and many modern commentators, 'They gave room to her on both hands'. Literally the words mean, 'they arranged for her two sides', thus making a space between which she could walk.

by *the way by the which the horses came* into *the king's house*] R.V. **by the way of the horses' entry to the king's house.** This is not to be confounded with the 'horse gate' of Jerusalem, spoken of Neh. iii. 28. That was a gate of the city, not of the king's palace. The way here spoken of was a private road to the king's house.

there was she slain] No doubt according to the orders of Jehoiada.

17—21. JEHOIADA RESTORES THE WORSHIP OF GOD. THE HOUSE OF BAAL IS DESTROYED. JOASH IS BROUGHT TO THE PALACE AND ENTHRONED. (2 Chron. xxiii. 16—xxiv. 1.)

17. *And Jehoiada made a covenant between the Lord*] In 2 Chron. 'Jehoiada' stands in the place of Jehovah, and it is said he made a covenant between *himself* and all the people and the king. Of course in the whole transaction he would appear as the representative of Jehovah, and receive in the name of the Lord the promise of both king and people, by which they dedicated themselves to the Lord.

between the king also and the people] i.e. that they should be loyal subjects and he a just ruler over them.

18. *went* into [R.V. **to**] *the house of Baal*] Athaliah had set up Baal worship in Judah after the fashion of the northern kingdom. We are told also in 2 Chron. xxiv. 7 that the sons of Athaliah had broken up (i.e. broken into) the house of God, and bestowed the dedicated things of the house of the Lord upon the Baalim. It is clear from this that the house of Baal was not any portion of the temple which had been appropriated to the idolatrous worship, but a separate building, into which spoils from the temple had been conveyed. It may have been on the same hill with the temple, though of that we cannot be

down; his altars and his images brake they in pieces throughly, and slew Mattan the priest of Baal before the altars. And the priest appointed officers over the house of
19 the LORD. And he took the rulers over hundreds, and the captains, and the guard, and all the people of the land; and they brought down the king from the house of the LORD, and came *by* the way of the gate of the guard *to* the king's
20 house. And he sat on the throne of the kings. And all

certain. There can however be no doubt that the Baal worship had not extended largely in Judah. Hence the readiness of the people of the land, called to Jerusalem by some festival, to go to the Baalite edifice and destroy it.

brake they in pieces throughly] That there should be no chance of a restoration. The multitude were no doubt helped in their destruction by the military force with which, in these doings, they had been in such close combination.

Mattan the priest of Baal] We read of no other priest of Baal in Judah, and so we may conclude that though the court favoured idolatry, it found no great favour with the rest of the kingdom. Otherwise we should have heard of an array of priests like that of Jezebel in Samaria.

And the priest appointed officers over the house of the Lord] From this necessity we may gather that the regular ministrations in the temple had been interfered with by the introduction of the Baalim. The Chronicler gives fuller details on this matter, and the two accounts have so much verbal similarity in other parts that we cannot avoid the conclusion that both writers used a common source of information. He says (2 Chron. xxiii. 18, 19) 'Jehoiada appointed the offices of the house of the Lord by the hand of the priests, the Levites, whom David had distributed in the house of the Lord, to offer the burnt offerings of the Lord, as it is written in the law of Moses, with rejoicing and with singing, *as it was ordained by* David. And he set the porters at the gates of the house of the Lord that none which was unclean in any thing should enter in'.

19. *And he took the rulers* [R.V. **captains**] *and the captains*] R.V. **the Carites**. On these words cf. above on verse 4.

and they brought down the king] The movement was a popular one, the people taking part with the soldiers and the priests. In 2 Chron. 'the nobles and the governors of the people' are included in the list. The temple was on a lofty height. Hence the phrase 'brought down'.

by *the way of the gate of the guard* to [R.V. **unto**] *the king's house*] This gate would be specially ready for the king's entry, as it was one of those secured by the arrangements described in verse 6.

he sat on the throne of the kings] On this throne, and its position in the palace which Solomon built, cf. note on 1 Kings vii. 7.

20. *And* [R.V. **So**] *all the people of the land rejoiced*] The attachment of Judah to the family of David had always been very great, and to see a son of that family on the throne, even though some of his

the people of the land rejoiced, and the city was in quiet: and they slew Athaliah with the sword *beside* the king's house. Seven years old *was* Jehoash when he *began* to reign. 21

In the seventh year of Jehu Jehoash *began* to reign; and forty years reigned he in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Zibiah of Beer-sheba. And Jehoash did *that* which *was* right in the sight of the LORD all his days where*in* Jehoiada the priest instructed him.[1] But the high places were not taken away: the people still sacrificed and burnt 12 2 3

blood was of Ahab's house, was far more to the mind of the people than to be ruled over by a daughter of Ahab.

and the city was in quiet] R.V. omits *in*, as is done in the parallel verse in 2 Chron. Cf. for the expression, the phrase so frequently recurring in Judges, 'the land had rest' (iii. 30; v. 31; &c.).

beside [R.V. **at**] *the king's house*] There is no preposition in the original as the italics of A.V. indicate; the noun is an accusative of place. Hence the 'at' of R.V. is warranted.

On the death of Athaliah Josephus (*Ant.* IX. 7. 3) says, 'Jehoiada having called the captains ordered them to take Athaliah into the valley of Kidron and there to kill her'. In xxv. 4 (see note there) we find that 'the king's garden' was very near to the Kidron valley. It may be therefore that the place indicated here 'beside (at) the king's house' was not far from the 'king's garden' spoken of there.

21. *Seven years old* was *Jehoash*] R.V. **Jehoash was seven years old.** This is the arrangement of the words in 2 Chron. Joash and Jehoash are duplicate forms of the same kind as have been noticed above on x. 15. The shorter form is used by the Chronicler, and is found presently below in xii. 19, 20.

CH. XII. **1—16.** JOASH REIGNS WELL BUT THE HIGH PLACES ARE NOT REMOVED. THE HOUSE OF THE LORD IS RESTORED. (2 Chronicles xxiv. 1—14.)

1. *Jehoash* began *to reign, and forty years reigned he in Jerusalem*] The R.V. puts the words into the usual order in these recitals, by placing 'began' before 'Jehoash' and 'he reigned' before 'forty years'.

2. *all his days*] In the original there is a division here in the verse, and the pronoun which both A.V. and R.V. render 'wherein' should, as the text stands, be translated 'because'. This statement that Jehoash did what was right *all his days* is opposed to the narrative in Chronicles. The LXX. appears not to have had 'his' in connexion with 'days', for the rendering is 'he did what was right all the days during which Jehoiada instructed him'. The necessity for being consistent with Chronicles has led to the rendering of the relative by 'wherein'.

3. *But* [R.V. **Howbeit**] *the high places were not taken away*] Worship having been permitted there before the temple was erected, it was

4 incense in the high places. And Jehoash said to the priests, All the money of the dedicated *things* that is brought *into* the house of the LORD, *even* the money of every one that passeth *the account*, the money that every man is set at, *and* all the money that cometh into any man's heart to bring

difficult to draw the people away from them, as they would be nearer at hand than the one place set apart for sacrifice, viz. Jerusalem, and they would also have acquired a degree of consecration from long use.

4. *And Jehoash said to the priests*] Even if we had not the definite statement which stands 2 Chron. xxiv. 7 of the depredations made on the temple by the sons of Athaliah, we can understand how under her rule the temple would be neglected and allowed to get out of repair. Hence the need which Jehoash recognised. It must have been some years after his accession when he gave these orders to the priests. At seven years old he would not be sensible of what was needed in such a matter.

All the money of the dedicated [R.V. **hallowed**] things] The change is to the rendering of the same word in verse 18 of this chapter. The money here spoken of is that which was given for the provision of vessels and implements for temple-service. Cf. 1 Kings vii. 51 and the verses preceding.

even *the money of every one that passeth* the account] R.V. **in current money**. The R.V. is supported by the rendering of A.V. in Gen. xxiii. 16 where the same participle is used as in this verse. We are not however to understand by 'current', money that was coined, which neither in Abraham's time nor in Joash's was in use among the Jews. They employed pieces of silver of varying weight, and the weighing was the mode of estimating its value. The translation of A.V. makes the word refer to the numbering which is described in Exod. xxx. 12, where the Israelites are directed to pay half a shekel each, as redemption money, on attaining the age of twenty years.

the money that every man is set at] R.V. **the money of the persons for whom each man is rated**. The literal rendering of the Hebrew is 'each man the money of the souls of his estimation'. The allusion is to such vows, and the assessments connected with them, as are described in Lev. xxvii. 2—8, in the case of those who made special singular vows, e.g. of a Nazirite.

the money that cometh [R.V. **that it cometh**] *into any man's heart to bring*] These were freewill offerings. Of the nature and occasions of such freewill offerings cf. Lev. xxii. 18—23; Deut. xvi. 10, with the parallel passages.

There are three kinds of offerings mentioned in the verse. (1) Current money offered for the provision of vessels and other things required for the temple. (2) The money which the priests were instructed to assess on those who had bound themselves by vows. (3) Voluntary gifts of which the appropriation was not prescribed. The offerings are said in Chronicles to be such as had been prescribed by Moses and by the congregation of Israel for the tabernacle of witness.

into the house of the LORD, let the priests take *it* to them, 5
every man of his acquaintance: and let them repair the
breaches of the house, wheresoever any breach shall be
found. But it was *so, that* in the three and twentieth year 6
of king Jehoash the priests had not repaired the breaches of
the house. Then king Jehoash called for Jehoiada the 7
priest, and the *other* priests, and said unto them, Why repair
ye not the breaches of the house? now therefore receive no

5. *let the priests take* it *to them, every man of his acquaintance*] This passage is not easy to understand until we have along with it the parallel account of the Chronicler. From 2 Kings it might be thought that the words of Jehoash applied to such offerings as were made at the temple, and then it would be hard to see what a man's acquaintance had to do with such a matter. But in 2 Chron. we are told that the priests and Levites were bidden 'to go out unto the cities of Judah and gather money of all Israel'. Hence nothing was more natural than that each should go among the people to whom he was best known, and from whom he would have the best chance of bringing in contributions. Josephus (*Ant.* IX. 8. 12) says that 'the priests and Levites were sent through the whole land to ask *half a shekel from each person* for the furniture and restoration of the temple, which had been broken up by Joram and Athaliah and her sons'.

and let them repair] R.V. **they shall repair.** This is literal, and besides allows more emphasis to be given to the pronoun 'they' which is placed in a marked position in the original. The wish of the king at first was to put the whole matter in the charge of the priest.

the breaches] The Hebrew word, which the LXX. merely transliterates (βεδέκ), is found only in this chapter and xxii. 5, and in Ezek. xxvii. 9, 27. But in the last-mentioned passages it is used of the filling up, by calking, of the chinks in ships. Hence we can understand the sort of decay which had taken place in the temple-building. Years of neglect had allowed the walls to crumble and crack and similar damages to arise in every part.

6. *In the three and twentieth year of king Jehoash*] By which time he must have attained the age of thirty and was able to act with decision. According to the Chronicler the first order had been, 'See that ye hasten the matter. Howbeit the Levites hastened it not'. That account also makes Jehoiada more personally responsible than he is here represented to have been. 'The king called for Jehoiada the chief, and said unto him, Why hast thou not required of the Levites to bring in out of Judah and out of Jerusalem the collection?'

the priests had not repaired the breaches] We are not told why this was so, though the king asked the question. They had evidently been receiving the money, for the king's order in the next verse is 'Take no more money'.

7. *Why repair ye not the breaches?*] No answer is given to this question either here or in 2 Chronicles. There can be no doubt that with

more money of your acquaintance, but deliver it for the
8 breaches of the house. And the priests consented to receive
no *more* money of the people, neither to repair the breaches
9 of the house. But Jehoiada the priest took a chest, and
bored a hole in the lid of it, and set it beside the altar, on the
right side as one cometh *into* the house of the LORD: and
the priests that kept the door put therein all the money that
10 was brought *into* the house of the LORD. And it was *so*,

the decay of the house of the Lord, the decrease of the offerings had also taken place. The priests and Levites had perhaps found much difficulty in increasing the sums collected, and in apportioning what they received between their own maintenance and the restoration-fund. There seems to have been no blame attached to them by the king, and the explanation they offered, whatever it may have been, was so far satisfactory that the priests which kept the door of the house were placed in charge of the box that was provided for the offerings.

now therefore receive [R.V. **take**] *no* more *money*] The collection which had at first been ordered (2 Chron. xxiv. 5) was now to cease. There was to be no going round to gather, but public offerings were to be made beside the altar when the worshippers came to Jerusalem. This seems to be the true principle, and calculated in all cases to stimulate bounty towards good works.

8. *the priests consented to receive no* more *money...neither to repair*] R.V. **that they should take no more money...neither repair.** They had clearly found the work beyond them, and were glad to be relieved both of the collection and the laying out of the fund. This consent of theirs is not alluded to by the Chronicler.

9. *But Jehoiada the priest took a chest*] The Chronicler says 'At the king's commandment they made a chest'. It is manifest that both king and priests were at one in changing the plan for raising a repair-fund. But it is not without interest to note that the narrative of Chronicles, which is assumed to bring the priest into prominence everywhere, here omits Jehoiada's name from the story.

set it beside the altar] In Chronicles it is said to have been 'set without at the gate of the house of the Lord'. The altar spoken of here is the brasen altar for burnt offerings which was outside the temple, in the court, before the porch of the temple. So the description in Chronicles appears to be a little less exact than in the verse before us. But the words which are added here 'on the right side as one cometh into the house of the Lord' may have given rise to the Chronicler's more vague description 'at the gate of the house of the Lord'. The account in Kings is to be preferred as drawn from some contemporary record and compiled earlier than the narrative in Chronicles.

all the money that was brought] In 2 Chron. xxiv. 9, 10 we are told that when the chest was set 'they made a proclamation through Judah and Jerusalem to bring in to the Lord the collection that Moses, the servant of God, laid upon Israel in the wilderness. And all the princes

when they saw that *there was* much money in the chest, that the king's scribe and the high priest came up, and they put up *in bags*, and told the money that was found *in* the house of the LORD. And they gave the money, being told, 11

and all the people rejoiced, and brought in, and cast into the chest, until they had made an end'. While the money had been given by individuals at their homes, and with no united action, the preparations had languished. The new arrangement put life into the work. The givers saw that others were giving as well as they, and found that a sum was being gathered of which regular account was kept, so that there was now some hope that the work would be completed. Josephus exactly hits the feeling which would be created in this way when he says πολὺν ἄργυρον καὶ χρυσὸν φιλοτιμούμενοι καὶ συνεισφέροντες ἠθροισαν. The spirit of cooperation was invoked and the contributors saw that success was likely to attend what they were doing. Hence their zealous efforts. The history is not without its value in our own days.

10. *when they saw that* there was *much money in the chest*] They could tell this by lifting, and beside this the priests were eye-witnesses of the liberal contribution.

the king's scribe] This was the royal secretary, through whom the king would be kept acquainted with the progress of the fund. It appears from 2 Chron. xxiv. 11 that the chest was carried unopened unto the king's office by the Levites, and that the examination and disposal of the contents took place there.

the high priest] The Chronicler says 'the high priest's officer'. Josephus says the king was present at the opening. What is meant by these varying statements is that these two were always represented and that now and then no doubt both king and high priest were there in person.

came up] To the place whither the chest had been brought for examination and to be emptied.

put up in bags] The literal meaning 'bound up' is given on the margins of A.V. and R.V. The verb is used of putting money together in a packet (Deut. xiv. 25). We must understand the proceeding to be in connexion with uncoined gold and silver. First it was tied up in some way into parcels, and then by weighing its value was found.

and told the money] i.e. As we should now say 'counted' it. But the total value was found by weighing. The old use of 'tell' for 'count' occurs several times in the O.T. 'Cf. Ps. cxlvii. 4 'He *telleth* the number of the stars'. So Jer. xxxiii. 13, 'The flocks pass under the hands of him that *telleth them*'. Compare Milton, *L'Allegro* 67,

> 'And every shepherd tells his tale
> Under the hawthorn in the dale'.

i.e. he counts the number of his sheep to see that none have been lost during the night.

11. *they gave the money, being told*] R.V. **that was weighed out.** Here by employing a different word the writer makes plain what was

into the hands of *them* that did the work, that had the oversight *of* the house of the LORD: and they laid it out to the carpenters and builders, that wrought upon the house of the
12 LORD, and to masons, and hewers of stone, and to buy timber and hewed stone to repair the breaches of the house of the LORD, and for all that was laid out for the house to
13 repair *it*. Howbeit there were not made *for* the house of the LORD bowls of silver, snuffers, basons, trumpets, any vessels of gold, or vessels of silver, of the money that
14 was brought *into* the house of the LORD: but they gave that to the workmen, and repaired therewith the house of the

meant by the previous 'telling' or 'counting'. The Chronicler adds that when this was done, the chest was carried back to its place, and that they did this from day to day, i.e. from time to time, and gathered money in abundance.

into the hands of them *that did the work*] Explained by the following clause as 'the overseers', the chief men who had charge of the restoration. The priests and the king's officer did not pay the workmen, but gave sums in gross over to the contractors.

and they laid [R.V. **paid**] *it out to the carpenters and* [R.V. **and the**] *builders*] Both nouns are defined, as are also '**the** masons and **the** hewers of stone' in the next verse. R.V. inserts the article there also.

12. *and to buy timber and hewed stone*] R.V. **And for buying timber and hewn stone.** The whole passage thus becomes, as the Hebrew makes it, dependent on the previous verb 'they paid it out', so that the overseers are represented as paying all wages and buying all materials.

13. *Howbeit* [R.V. **But**] *there were not made* for *the house of the Lord*] The compiler of Kings makes mention of certain vessels and implements which *were not made* at this time and from these contributions. Such were cups of silver, snuffers, basons, trumpets, and vessels of gold or vessels of silver, &c. as here recited. The Chronicler on the other hand dwells on such things as *were made*, and his list comprises 'vessels to minister and to offer withal, and spoons, and vessels of gold and silver'. The one it will be seen says that vessels of gold and silver *were made*, the other that vessels of gold and silver *were not made*. But both writers are referring to the class of articles they have mentioned before. So of gold and silver there *were not made* cups, snuffers, basons &c., but vessels for ministration and spoons *were made*. They do not necessarily contradict each other.

bowls [R.V. **cups**] *of silver*] An attempt has been made in R.V., to give the same renderings to the same words in the enumeration of vessels for the temple. Hence the change here and 1 Kings vii. 50 and Jer. lii. 19. The Hebrew word is rendered 'cup' in Zech. xii. 2 by A.V., and on the margin of 2 Sam. xvii. 28. The word very frequently signifies 'a threshold'. Hence the LXX. here has θύραι = doors.

14. *but* [R.V. **For**] *they gave that to the workmen*] R.V. **to them**

LORD. Moreover they reckoned not with the men, into 15
whose hand they delivered the money to be bestowed on
workmen: for they dealt faithfully. The trespass money 16
and sin money was not brought *into* the house of the LORD:
it was the priests'.

Then Hazael king of Syria went up, and fought against 17
Gath, and took it: and Hazael set his face to go up to
Jerusalem. And Jehoash king of Judah took all the hal- 18

that did the work. The Hebrew expression is the same as in verse 11, and signifies the overseers, not the craftsmen.

15. *the men into whose hand they delivered*] This must refer to certain treasurers into whose care each new chest full of offerings was entrusted. These were selected at first as being men who were sure to deal uprightly, and to them, without demanding any account, all was given over, and through their hands it was passed on to the overseers and contractors, and thus distributed to the workmen.

to be bestowed on workmen] R.V. **to give to them that did the work.** The same expression and with the same signification as in verses 11 and 14.

16. *The trespass money*] R.V. **The money for the guilt offerings.** 'Guilt offering' was adopted by R.V. in Lev. v. 1—6 and throughout the law for the 'trespass-offering' of A.V., to accord with the verb and the adjective which are rendered in that leading passage 'to be guilty' and 'guilty'. 'Trespass money' occurs nowhere else but in this verse.

sin money] R.V. **the money for the sin-offering.** On this see Lev. v. 7—12. 'Sin money' is found nowhere else.

it was the priests'] See Lev. xiv. 13. 'For as the sin-offering is the priest's, so is the trespass (R.V. **guilt**) offering'.

17—21. HAZAEL THREATENS TO ATTACK JERUSALEM, BUT IS BOUGHT OFF BY JEHOASH. A CONSPIRACY IS FORMED AGAINST JEHOASH, AND HE IS MURDERED. (2 Chron. xxiv. 23—27.)

17. *Hazael*] See chap. viii. 8.

fought against Gath] Gath was one of the five great cities of the Philistines, though it is not clear whether at this time it was in the hands of Judah or of the Philistines. It lay almost directly west between Jerusalem and the Mediterranean. Before he came to Gath, Hazael must have made his way through the northern kingdom of Israel.

Hazael set his face to go up to Jerusalem] It is needful to mention here those events in the history of Judah which the Chronicler records before the story of the Syrian invasion, but which are not noticed in 2 Kings. Jehoiada the high priest died at the age of 130, and was buried with great honour among the kings of Judah. After that Jehoash, following the persuasions of the princes of Judah, fell away into idolatry, and wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem. God sent them prophets

lowed *things* that Jehoshaphat, and Jehoram, and Ahaziah, his fathers, kings of Judah, had dedicate, and his own hallowed *things*, and all the gold that was found in the treasures of the house of the LORD, and *in* the king's house, and sent *it* to Hazael king of Syria: and he went away from Jeru-
19 salem. And the rest of the acts of Joash, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of
20 the kings of Judah? And his servants arose, and made a

but they gave no ear. Among others Zechariah the son of Jehoiada rebuked both king and people for their transgressions, and at the king's commandment the people stoned him to death in the court of the house of the Lord. So Jehoash slew the son of his benefactor, and Zechariah when dying appealed to God against his countrymen and their king, saying, 'The Lord look upon it and require it'. The Syrian expedition is evidently regarded by the Chronicler as a visitation from God for these sins of the land. But he gives us also some details which are required for the understanding of 2 Kings. It seems strange when we read here that Jehoash made the large sacrifices described in the next verse because Hazael had merely set his face (i.e. formed the design) to go up to Jerusalem. But when this is supplemented by the statement (2 Chron. xxiv. 23, 24) that the host of Syria had come to Judah and Jerusalem, and had destroyed all the princes of the people, and had sent the spoil to the king of Damascus (i.e. Hazael), and also that a very great host of Judah had been conquered by a small company of Syrians, we are at no loss to understand the sacrifices which Jehoash made to buy off so formidable an enemy.

18. *hallowed* things] See above on verse 4.

kings of Judah had dedicate] No doubt there were occasions in almost every reign when the king was able to give from his conquests some gift as a thankoffering to God for success. Hence the sacred treasures would come to be of great value.

and he went away from Jerusalem] Since Hazael is not mentioned by the Chronicler as present in this expedition, and the spoils are described as being sent away to him, we may conclude that what he is here said to have done was done by the hosts of Syria which he sent forth. In Chronicles, though nothing is said there about the way in which Jehoash bribed the Syrians to depart, we learn that for some reason or other they did depart without prosecuting the siege of Jerusalem.

19. *And* [R.V. **Now**] *the rest of the acts of Joash*] Here and in the next verse the shorter form of the king's name is introduced. Some of the acts of Joash have been noticed above on verse 17. The compiler of Kings seems to have thought it unnecessary to mention anything but the way in which the true heir was restored to the throne, and how in his days the temple was restored, the family of David and the service of Jehovah taking as it were new root at this time.

20. *And his servants arose*] The Chronicler tells us that the Syrians left the king suffering from 'great diseases', perhaps from wounds

conspiracy, and slew Joash *in* the house of Millo, which goeth down *to* Silla. For Jozachar the son of Shimeath, 21
and Jehozabad the son of Shomer, his servants, smote him, and he died; and they buried him with his fathers in the city of David: and Amaziah his son reigned in his stead.

received in some battle against the Syrians. He adds also that it was because of the blood 'of the *sons* of Jehoiada' that the conspiracy was formed against Joash. From which it would seem that not Zechariah only but the whole family of Jehoiada had been put to death by the ungrateful king.

slew Joash in *the house of Millo*] R.V. **smote Joash at** &c. We see from 2 Chronicles that the king was lying sick at this place. So it probably was some royal residence, or some part thereof. On 'Millo', the name of some part of the fortifications of Jerusalem, cf. 1 Kings ix. 15. Perhaps the place indicated in this verse may have been part of that fortress. The 'house of Millo' is mentioned before this, in Judges ix. 6, but that passage has no connexion with this. The Hebrew 'Beth-Millo', translated 'house of Millo', may have been one proper name which we ought to retain without translation, as in so many other words formed with 'Beth' as a prefix.

which goeth down to *Silla*] R.V. on the way **that goeth down to Silla**. The LXX. and other versions take 'Silla' as a proper name, but we have no knowledge of it except from this place.

21. *For Jozachar* [R.V. **Jozacar**] *the son of Shimeath, and Jehozabad the son of Shomer*] In 2 Chron. the names of the conspirators are given as 'Zabad the son of Shimeath an Ammonitess, and Jehozabad the son of Shemrith a Moabitess'. Between זבד Zabad and זכר Zacar, the abbreviated form of Jozacar, it is easy to see how a mistake might arise from the similarity of the Hebrew letters. The Chronicler who mentions the nationality of the mothers gives their names both in the feminine form. In Kings the last two letters from שמרית (Shemrith) have fallen out and so the name has become שמר (Shomer). Although these names are without doubt historical it is very remarkable (as Thenius points out) how when they are translated they recall Zechariah's last words 'The Lord look upon it and require it'. For they signify '*Jehovah-remembers*', the son of '*Hearer*'; and '*Jehovah-gives*', the son of '*Watcher*'.

and they buried him with his fathers] i.e. In the city of David, but as the Chronicler records, not in the sepulchres of the kings. The words of the Chronicler about the 'greatness of the burdens' laid upon Jehoash refer to the many prophetic oracles which were uttered against him in consequence of his evil deeds. Cf. for that sense of the word 'burden' Is. xiii. 1, and many other passages of that prophet. On the margin R.V. in such cases, gives 'oracle concerning'.

and Amaziah his son] The Chronicler (2 Chron. xxiv. 27) speaks of the '*sons* of Jehoash'; we know nothing however of any son but

13 In the three and twentieth year of Joash the son of Aha-
ziah king of Judah Jehoahaz the son of Jehu *began* to reign
2 over Israel in Samaria, *and reigned* seventeen years. And
he did *that* which *was* evil in the sight of the LORD, and
followed the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which made
3 Israel to sin; he departed not therefrom. And the anger
of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he delivered
them into the hand of Hazael king of Syria, and into the
4 hand of Ben-hadad the son of Hazael, all *their* days. And

Amaziah, though it is said (2 Chron. xxiv. 3) 'Jehoiada took for Jehoash two wives, and he begat sons and daughters'.

CH. XIII. 1—9. REIGN OF JEHOAHAZ, SON OF JEHU, OVER ISRAEL. (Not in Chronicles.)

1. *In the three-and-twentieth year of Joash...king of Judah, Jehoahaz* ...began *to reign*] The chronology here seems inconsistent with verse 10. Jehoahaz's seventeen years, according to the statement before us, would go on to the *fortieth* year of Joash king of Judah, whereas the successor of Jehoahaz is stated in verse 10 to have begun his reign in the *thirty-seventh* year of Joash. It is possible that seventeen years, according to Jewish reckoning, may really have been very little more than fifteen. Still that does not bring the dates into accord. Where the mistake may be is not easy to discover. The LXX. represents the same numbers, which it is clear cannot all be correct, though the error is not large. See Chronological Table in the Introduction.

Jehoahaz the son of Jehu] The first of the four generations for which God promised that the line of Jehu should continue.

2. *which made Israel to sin*] R.V. **wherewith he made**, &c. As usual. The same change is needed below in verses 6 and 11 of this chapter. We must understand the language of this verse as referring not only to the days of Jehoahaz, but to those of his father Jehu, at least so far as the delivery of Israel into the hand of Hazael is concerned. For in x. 32 we have already been told that in the time of Jehu 'the Lord began to cut Israel short, and Hazael smote them'. What the writer here wishes to represent is that in spite of the calamities which befel the nation from Hazael in the previous reign, the son was no better than his father, and so 'the Lord's anger was kindled'; He sent severer punishments on those whom His warnings had not moved, and Hazael not only inflicted blows on the power of Israel, but made them still more subject to him.

3. *all* their *days*] R.V. **continually.** The sense cannot be what is represented by A.V. For in the days of Benhadad (2 Kings xiii. 25) the son of Jehoahaz made conquests from Benhadad. Hence 'all the days' must mean the days of Jehoahaz, which accords with the statement of verse 22 below. So 'continually' must refer to the whole of this reign.

Jehoahaz besought the LORD, and the LORD hearkened unto him: for he saw the oppression of Israel, because the king of Syria oppressed them. (And the LORD gave Israel a 5
saviour, so that they went out from under the hand of the Syrians: and the children of Israel dwelt in their tents, as beforetime. Nevertheless they departed not from the sins 6
of the house of Jeroboam, who made Israel sin, *but* walked therein: and there remained the grove also in Samaria.)

4. *Jehoahaz besought the Lord, and the Lord hearkened unto him*] Just as in the case of punishment God does not always visit at once, even though an Ahab have sold himself to work wickedness, so in the case of mercy, the intervention of Jehovah is postponed to another generation. The Syrians are allowed to oppress Israel all the days of Jehoahaz, though we are told that his prayer had been heard. In the days of Jehoash, the next successor, some alleviation was afforded by the victories of that king over Benhadad (xiii. 25), but it was not, as it seems, till the following generation that the full answer to the prayer came.

5. *And the Lord gave Israel a saviour*] The LXX. has σωτηρίαν 'salvation', 'deliverance'. The two verses 5 and 6 are a parenthesis, and interrupt the connexion. The '*saviour*' alludes to what is said of Jeroboam II. (xiv. 27). 'The Lord *saved* Israel by the hand of Jeroboam the son of Joash'. This was the time when the prayer of Jehoahaz was truly answered, in the reign of his grandson. That passage is connected with this also by the language of the preceding verse (26) 'The Lord *saw the affliction of Israel*, that it was bitter'.

so that they went out from under the hand of the Syrians] Language like this must refer to some very great change in the relative positions of Syria and Israel. We have some indication of it in the statement (xiv. 28) that Jeroboam recovered Damascus for Israel. By such a reverse the power of Syria must have been severely broken. We learn from the cuneiform inscriptions (1 Rawl. 35) that Damascus was about this time made subject to Assyria (Schrader p. 110; Eng. Trans. vol. I. 203). It may be therefore that by the help of Assyria (which we have seen that Israel sometimes gained at the expense of liberty) the kings of Israel were able to shake off the thraldom of their nearer, and therefore more galling, oppressor, at first partially, then completely, so as to come from under his hand.

the children of Israel dwelt in their tents] The expression may refer to the peaceful state when the dwellers in the country could live safely out amid their flocks and crops, and not be constrained by the pressure of war to seek refuge in the towns. But it has been noted (see on 1 Kings viii. 66) that 'tents' is used for 'homes'. Hence the words of this verse may mean only that the people lived quietly at home, and were not constantly called forth to resist the inroads of the Syrians.

6. *and there remained the grove* [R.V. Ashêrah] *also in Samaria*] On Ashérah, by which is probably meant a wooden image of a goddess

7 Neither did he leave *of* the people to Jehoahaz but fifty horsemen, and ten chariots, and ten thousand footmen; for the king of Syria had destroyed them, and had made them
8 like the dust by threshing. Now the rest of the acts of Jehoahaz, and all that he did, and his might, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?
9 And Jehoahaz slept with his fathers; and they buried him in Samaria: and Joash his son reigned in his stead.
10 In the thirty and seventh year of Joash king of Judah

worshipped with similar rites to those of the god Baal, see note on 1 Kings xiv. 15. Jehu had not eliminated all that belonged to the Tyrian idolatry, and his successors were no more earnest to do so than himself.

7. *Neither did he leave* of *the people to Jehoahaz but fifty horsemen*] R.V. **For he left not to Jehoahaz of the people save fifty horsemen.** Not only does R.V. render the original here more exactly, but it indicates clearly where the parenthesis of the last two verses comes to an end. We have here the continuation of verse 4, and a picture of the character and extent of the Syrian oppression. When we call to mind that in David's times (2 Sam. xxiv. 9) the warriors of Israel were eight hundred thousand men, we can form some idea of the way in which Israel was now 'cut short'.

the king of Syria had destroyed them, and had made them] The R.V. omits '**had**' in both places. This is right, for the description refers to the time of Jehoahaz. Whether the destruction here mentioned was by making them slaves or by extermination, we cannot tell, but it is much the most probable that a warlike people like the Syrians would take soldiers prisoners and use them in their wars with Assyria and elsewhere.

like the dust by threshing] R.V. **in threshing.** The correct sense is given on the margin of R.V. 'dust to trample on'. The Oriental manner of threshing is by the trampling of oxen's feet, and the figure is used to signify the utter prostration of Israel. The LXX. also has the right idea, giving *εἰς καταπάτησιν*. For the word used thus of trampling under foot cf. Isaiah xxv. 10 'Moab shall be *trodden down* under him even as straw is *trodden down*', where the margin gives twice over 'threshed'. The reference in the margin of A.V. to Amos i. 3 where the cruelties of Damascus are described, 'they have threshed Gilead with threshing instruments of iron', probably does not apply to the account before us. All that is here meant is that Israel was utterly reduced and broken. The 'dust in threshing' of R.V. is an attempt to be literal and yet to avoid the implication of barbarity which is conveyed in A.V.

10—13. Reign of Jehoash king of Israel. (2 Chron. xxv. 17—24.)

10. *In the thirty and seventh year of Joash*] See above on verse 1.

began Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz to reign over Israel in Samaria, *and reigned* sixteen years. And he did *that* which 11
was evil in the sight of the LORD; he departed not from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel sin: *but* he walked therein. And the rest of the acts of 12
Joash, and all that he did, and his might where*with* he fought against Amaziah king of Judah, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? And Joash 13
slept with his fathers; and Jeroboam sat upon his throne: and Joash was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel.

Now Elisha was fallen sick of his sickness whereof he 14
died. And Joash the king of Israel came down unto him, and wept over his face, and said, O my father, my father, the

Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz] As in the case of Jehoash king of Judah (see xii. 2, 19, 20) so here the longer form, in the previous verse the shorter form of this name is written. This was the second of the four generations promised to Jehu.

12. *his might where*with *he fought against Amaziah king of Judah*] The story of Amaziah's challenge to Jehoash is told in xiv. 8—14 and in 2 Chron. xxv. He was proud of his victory over Edom, and sent to the king of Israel saying, 'Come let us see one another in the face', and, in spite of the wise message of Jehoash, would come forth to battle and was defeated at Beth-shemesh. After his victory the king of Israel broke down a part of the wall of Jerusalem, and carried away the treasures and vessels both from the house of the Lord and from the king's house.

13. *and Jeroboam sat upon his throne*] i.e. Jeroboam the second, who was the third generation of the family of Jehu. This form of words concerning a royal succession is unusual. We generally have 'reigned in his stead'. See below xiv. 16 for the usual form concerning this same king.

with the kings of Israel] Though Samaria was only built by Omri, Ahab's father, yet by this time it had become the favourite city and the burial-place of the royal family.

14—21. THE VISIT OF JOASH TO ELISHA ON HIS DEATHBED. ELISHA'S PREDICTION OF VICTORY OVER SYRIA. A DEAD BODY BROUGHT TO LIFE ON TOUCHING ELISHA'S BONES. (Not in Chronicles.)

14. *and wept over his face*] R.V. over him. 'Face' in Hebrew is constantly used for 'a person', and it seems more suitable to omit the very literal rendering here. For examples cf. Gen. xix. 21, 'I have accepted thee', margin 'thy face'; Gen. xliii. 34, 'He sent messes from before him', margin 'his face'.

It is manifest from this history that though Jehoash continued the

15 chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof. And Elisha said
unto him, Take bow and arrows. And he took unto him bow
16 and arrows. And he said to the king of Israel, Put thine
hand upon the bow. And he put his hand *upon it:* and
17 Elisha put his hands upon the king's hands. And he said,
Open the window eastward. And he opened *it.* Then
Elisha said, Shoot. And he shot. And he said, The arrow
of the LORD'S deliverance, and the arrow of deliverance
from Syria: for thou shalt smite the Syrians in Aphek, till

worship of the calves, the worship of Jehovah can have met with no opposition from him, and Jehovah's prophet was held in the highest esteem. Indeed the picture presented of the king leaving his palace to visit the house of the dying prophet, and weeping over the approaching loss which Israel was to suffer makes us wonder that Elisha's influence had not the effect of banishing the calves. The political significance of these objects must have been very great to have outweighed the counsels which we cannot doubt Elisha gave for their abolition.

O my father, my father] R.V. omits '*O*', which A.V. does not give in the corresponding passage ii. 12. Elisha's help had been so often given to Israel against their enemies, that the words seem to apply even better to him than to Elijah.

the chariot [R.V. **chariots**] *of Israel*] The word is meant to embrace the whole mounted host, the chariotry of the land. Hence the plural is the more correct rendering. See the note on ii. 12.

15. *Take bow and arrows*] It is as if the prophet by this significant action directed and encouraged the king to enter on the war against Syria.

16. *and Elisha put* [R.V. **laid**] *his hands upon the king's hands*] It will be seen from the marginal rendering of A.V. that the two verbs, both translated 'put', are not the same. Hence the need for change in the English. The first verb = *make thine hand to ride*, is expressive of the grasp of the archer. The action of the prophet in placing his feeble hands upon the king's is meant to be symbolic, and to extend, through the prophet, God's blessing to the undertaking which he has suggested.

17. *And he said, Open the window*] That there might be a free space for the arrow to be shot through. The command must be directed to some attendant, as the king was holding the bow ready to shoot when he was bidden. The windows of this time were merely open gratings, not filled with anything transparent.

eastward] Because eastward from Samaria lay the land of Gilead, the country on which the Syrians were so constantly making their attacks, and which they now had to a great degree in their possession.

The arrow of the Lord's deliverance] R.V. **The Lord's arrow of victory**. The R.V. represents more exactly the force of the Hebrew, which describes this arrow of victory as belonging to the Lord, i.e. as being specially directed by Him, and so assured of its result.

and the arrow of deliverance from Syria] R.V. **even the arrow of**

thou have consumed *them.* And he said, Take the arrows. 18
And he took *them.* And he said unto the king of Israel,
Smite upon the ground. And he smote thrice, and stayed.
And the man of God was wroth with him, and said, *Thou* 19
shouldest have smitten five or six times; then hadst thou
smitten Syria till *thou* hadst consumed *it:* whereas now thou
shalt smite Syria *but* thrice. And Elisha died, and they 20
buried him. And the bands of the Moabites invaded the

victory over Syria. The sentence is in apposition with the previous clause. The former looks to the prompter of the battle, the latter clause to the result.

in Aphek] This is probably the place of that name which was on the east of the sea of Galilee. See note on 1 Kings xx. 26. The region east of the Jordan was the constant battle-ground between Israel and Syria. See above on x. 32—33.

till thou *have consumed* them] This was the prophet's thought and the purport of his message. The lack of zeal in Joash by the giving of only three strokes when Elisha hoped for five or six, diminished the completeness of the victory which God had promised.

18. *Take the arrows*] By the previous symbolical act, the prophet has directed the king to go eastward with courage against the enemy, assured that the Lord will be with his arrows, and will regard them as His own. He now proceeds to test the zeal of Joash.

Smite upon the ground] The Hebrew indicates the *direction* of the blows 'towards the ground'. It appears as though the prophet wished blows to be aimed as if intended to strike down a foe. So the sense is equivalent to 'strike (some one) down to the ground'. It does not seem that there was to be any shooting of the arrows in this second figurative action, but only a series of blows made with them as they were grasped, and aimed at some imaginary enemy who was to be brought down.

And he smote thrice, and stayed] On 'stayed' in this sense of 'ceased' cf. on iv. 6 above. The act, which was intended to be an index of his earnestness, is very feebly performed, and so the promise is curtailed: 'now thou shalt smite Syria but thrice'.

19. *the man of God was wroth*] We must think of sorrow as well as anger. We can see through all Elisha's life, that the welfare of his country was very dear to him. Hence his desire that the king should accept God's announcement of victory with eagerness, and his grief that he did not.

20. *And* [R.V. **Now**] *the bands of the Moabites invaded the land*] If Elisha died in Samaria, and was buried in that neighbourhood, we must suppose Moab to have made great inroads upon Israel if the bands of plunderers could advance close to the royal city. Probably the great devastations of the Syrians on the east of Jordan (x. 32, 33) made it easier for the Moabites to cross the Jordan and to ravage the lands of Israel to the west of the river.

21 land *at* the coming in of the year. And it came to pass, as they were burying a man, that behold, they spied a band *of men;* and they cast the man into the sepulchre of Elisha: and when the man was let down, and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived, and stood up on his feet.

at *the coming in of the year*] We can see from such passages as 2 Sam. xi. 1; 1 Kings xx. 22, 26; 1 Chron. xx. 1; 2 Chron. xxxvi. 10, that there was a season of the year at which alone it was usual, and perhaps, on account of the climate, possible, for an army to take the field. The general expression is 'when the year was expired': but this is very much the same as 'at the coming in of another year'.

21. *as they were burying a man*] i.e. Some Israelites had brought a dead body to the burial-place. The body was carried on a bier, and was not enclosed in a coffin (cf. Luke vii. 12—14), so that when cast into the grave it would touch any other body which had been deposited there before. In the East the graves are usually excavated in the rock, and closed by a stone at the mouth. The bodies were laid there, but there was no covering them with earth as in burials among western nations.

behold they spied a band of men] The R.V. omits the italics. The band was a band of the marauding Moabites, at whose approach the Israelites were terrified, and so made all haste to dispose of the corpse they were carrying.

unto the sepulchre of Elisha] This must have been nearer at hand than the grave which they intended to use. The distance from which the Moabites were visible allowed the bearers to open the first grave they came to, and there to lay down their burden, but gave time for nothing more. Josephus says that it was *the robbers* who had killed a man and that *they* cast him into Elisha's grave (*Ant.* IX. 8. 6).

and when the man was let down and touched] R.V. **and as soon as the man touched.** It will be seen from the margin of R.V. that the Hebrew means 'and when the man went and touched'; a very unusual kind of expression, but which does not warrant the idea conveyed by the A.V. that the body was lowered into the tomb.

the bones of Elisha] We need not press the literal sense of 'bones', as though a long time had elapsed since Elisha died. The lying prophet of Bethel (1 Kings xiii. 31), speaking of his own death and burial, says 'Lay my *bones* beside his *bones*'.

he revived and stood up on his feet] The record of this miracle seems intended to set forth that it was nothing in the prophet himself which had given him the great powers he manifested in his lifetime. Through his dead body God could work a miracle also. 'Israel shall well see that He lives, by whose virtue Elisha was, both in life and death, miraculous. While the prophet was alive, the impetration might seem to be his, though the power were God's; now that he is dead, the bones can challenge nothing, but send the wandering Israelites to that Almighty agent to whom it is all one to work by the quick or dead.' (Bp. Hall.)

But Hazael king of Syria oppressed Israel all the days of 22
Jehoahaz. And the LORD was gracious unto them, and had 23
compassion on them, and had respect unto them, because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and would not destroy them, neither cast he them from his presence as yet. So Hazael king of Syria died; and Ben-hadad his son 24
reigned in his stead. And Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz took 25
again out of the hand of Ben-hadad the son of Hazael the cities, which he had taken out of the hand of Jehoahaz his father by war. Three times did Joash beat him, and recovered the cities of Israel.

22—25. HAZAEL'S OPPRESSION OF ISRAEL. GOD HAS COMPASSION ON THEM. THE VICTORIES OF JEHOASH OVER BEN-HADAD. (Not in Chronicles.)

22. *But* [R.V. **And**] *Hazael...oppressed Israel*] In these four verses we have a recapitulation of the attitude of Syria toward the Israelites in the two reigns of Jehoahaz and his son. The oppression lasted all the days of the former king, but yet, as in answer to his prayer (verse 4), Israel was not allowed to be destroyed. In the next reign came a greater relief.

23. *And* [R.V. **But**] *the Lord was gracious unto them*] Cf. for the sentiment, Malachi iii. 6, 'I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.'

as yet] The writer of Kings was living at the time of the captivity. He therefore knew that the grace and compassion had been shewn in vain, and that the kingdom of Israel had at last been utterly destroyed.

24. *Ben-hadad his son*] Hazael has given to his son the name which had previously been common in the Syrian royal family. This is the third Ben-hadad on the throne of Damascus. (Cf. Schrader, p. 109.) Nothing is known of him from the inscriptions.

25. *And Jehoash...took again...the cities*] Ben-hadad must have been a very different monarch from his father. The fifty horsemen and ten chariots and ten thousand footmen (verse 7) must have been allowed to increase very rapidly to effect so complete a change in the relations between Syria and Israel as is here represented. We are forced to think again of Assyrian help to Israel before we can realize the altered state of things.

Three times did Joash beat [R.V. **smite**] *him*] The history is introduced that the prophecy of Elisha may be pointed out as fulfilled. By these three victories Syria must have been driven from the west side of the Jordan, the land which had been conquered by Hazael in the reign of Jehoahaz. The eastern side of Jordan was already in the hand of Syria before Jehoahaz came to the throne. It had been conquered by Hazael in the days of Jehu (x. 32, 33).

14 In the second year of Joash son of Jehoahaz king of Israel
2 reigned Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah. He was
twenty and five years old when he *began* to reign, and reigned
twenty and nine years in Jerusalem. And his mother's
3 name *was* Jehoaddan of Jerusalem. And he did *that* which
was right in the sight of the LORD, yet not like David his
father: he did according to all *things* as Joash his father did.
4 Howbeit the high places were not taken away: as yet the
people did sacrifice and burnt incense on the high places.
5 And it came to pass, as soon as the kingdom was confirmed
in his hand, that he slew his servants which had slain the
6 king his father. But the children of the murderers he slew
not: according unto that which is written in the book of the

CH. XIV. 1—7. REIGN OF AMAZIAH, KING OF JUDAH. HE SLAYS HIS FATHER'S MURDERERS. HIS VICTORY OVER THE EDOMITES. (2 Chron. xxv. 1—4.)

1. *In the second year of Joash...king of Israel*] See above on xiii. 1.

Joash son of Jehoahaz] R.V. **Joahaz.** This variation of the orthography is in the Hebrew.

reigned Amaziah...king of Judah] R.V. **began Amaziah...king of Judah to reign.** In verse 23 of this chapter the A.V. renders the same form of the verb (as is often done) by 'began to reign'.

2. *He was twenty and five years old*] His father Joash died at about 47 years of age. So Amaziah was born when his father was twenty-two.

his mother's name was Jehoaddan] R. V. **Jehoaddin.** The R.V. follows the *Kethib*. The A.V. has the same form as in 2 Chron. The LXX. gives Ἰωαδίμ, and Josephus Ἰωδαδῆ.

3. *yet not like David his father*] The Chronicler merely gives 'but not with a perfect heart', making no mention of Amaziah's resemblance to Joash, nor of his falling short of David.

according to all things *as Joash his father did*] R.V. **had done.** Of course this can only refer to the general resemblance not to the various parts of Amaziah's conduct. The next verse, which is almost word for word the same as is said in xii. 3 concerning Joash, shews how Amaziah walked in his father's footsteps.

5. *as soon as the kingdom was confirmed* [R.V. **established**] *in his hand*] The change is in conformity with 2 Chronicles. It is worth notice that the conspirators made no attempt, as it seems, to divert the succession from the house of David, though they might have expected that the son would take revenge on his father's murderers.

6. *the children of the murderers he slew not*] R.V. **he put not to death.** The Hebrew has a different verb here from that which is twice over used for 'to slay' in the previous verse.

according unto that which is written in the book of the law of Moses] The compiler of Kings either took this statement from his original

law of Moses, where*in* the LORD commanded, saying, The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, nor the children be put to death for the fathers; but every man shall be put to death for his own sin. He slew *of* Edom in 7
the valley of salt ten thousand, and took Selah by war, and called the name of it Joktheel unto this day.

record, or he inserted it in his narrative because he felt that it was an act which accorded with the legal command. In either case he looked upon the law as existing and observed in the days of Amaziah, and therefore that Deut. xxiv. 16, where this command is recorded, was existent before Amaziah's days, and therefore long before the days of Josiah, to which date some propose to refer the composition of the fifth book of Moses.

*where*in [R.V. as] *the Lord commanded*] The change is in accordance with the Hebrew, cf. Exod. xxxiv. 18. The relative is not here in its most usual form for the sense of 'as', but it could hardly be explained as=wherein. Another example of this less common use is in Jer. xxxiii. 22.

every man shall be put to death [R.V. shall die] *for his own sin*] The *Kethib* gives a different form of the verb in the last clause and the R.V. has followed this. The text in Deut. xxiv. 16 agrees with the translation of A.V. and no doubt this was the reason why that form was preferred here also, being given by the *Keri*.

7. *He slew* of *Edom*] The Chronicler in 2 Chron. xxv. 5—10 gives an account of Amaziah's military preparations, before the expedition against Edom. He tells us that he gathered and marshalled his men of war, from twenty years old and upward, to the number of 300,000 choice men. To these he hired mercenary troops out of Israel, another 100,000. But a man of God forbade him to take the Israelites with him, as the Lord was not with Israel. Though grieved at the loss of the hundred talents, which he had paid for this body of allies, Amaziah separated them and sent them back again, wherefore their anger was greatly kindled against Judah, and they returned home in great wrath. After this with his own troops only Amaziah undertook the war with Edom, in which he was successful. According to Josephus (*Ant.* IX. 9. 1) the first planned expedition was against the Amalekites and Gebalites as well as the Edomites. On Gebal, a city of Phœnicia, see note on 1 Kings v. 18.

in the valley of salt] The R.V. prints both 'Valley' and 'Salt' with capitals to mark it as a proper name. The LXX. has a transliteration of the two words Γεμελέδ. The Valley of Salt lay at the south of the Dead Sea, and was on the border of the Edomite territory. We read that the Edomites had revolted from Judah in the days of Joram (2 Kings viii. 20—22), and it seems they had not as yet been reduced to subjection.

ten thousand] Beside the 10,000 slain in the battle, the Chronicler

8 Then Amaziah sent messengers to Jehoash, the son of

mentions 10,000 more who were taken captive, and cast headlong from the rock so 'that they all were broken in pieces' (2 Chron. xxv. 12).

and took Selah [R.V. **Sela**] *by war*] Sela which signifies 'a rock' is probably the city which was known in later times as 'Petra'. It was a city of Edom, not far from Mount Hor, about 2 days' journey northward from the top of the gulf of Akabah. The Chronicler says nothing about Sela, but mentions 'the rock' as the place from which the 10,000 captives were cast down. It may have been from the height on which Sela stood and took its name, that the execution of the captives took place.

called the name of it Joktheel] This name, which is a trisyllable (Jokthe-él) is interpreted by Gesenius as 'a Deo subactum'. It might with propriety be given by Amaziah to a city won by him after the direction which God had given him to put away the Israelite mercenaries. He would consider that the victory was a direct gift from God.

unto this day] That Sela continued to be called Joktheel at the time when the book of Kings was compiled is in the highest degree improbable. We know that Edom reconquered some of the lost territory very soon (2 Chron. xxviii. 17) and during the captivity made inroads into the south of Judah as far as Hebron (Joseph. *Ant.* XII. 8. 6). But in this passage the compiler takes the words of an earlier writer, exactly as they stood, and that earlier record was made before Sela was recovered and before the name Joktheel had fallen into disuse.

8—16. Amaziah's challenge to Joash king of Israel. Answer of Joash. Defeat of Amaziah. Death of Joash. (2 Chron. xxv. 17—24).

8. *Then Amaziah sent messengers to Jehoash*] The Chronicler gives a history anterior to the challenge of Amaziah, which explains why the king who had been divinely guided before the Edomite expedition was left without the like guidance afterwards. We are told that Amaziah brought back from Edom the gods of the children of Seir and set them up to be his gods, and when a prophet was sent to rebuke him, he threatened the messenger of God with punishment. Upon this the prophet forbare, but left the king with the words, 'I know that God hath determined to destroy thee, because thou hast done this and hast not hearkened unto my counsel'. The Chronicler also says that before his challenge 'Amaziah king of Judah took advice', which forces one to think of the counsellors whom Rehoboam listened to at the time of his accession, and by following whom he brought about the revolt of the ten tribes. It may be that the conduct of the Israelitish soldiers whom Amaziah had sent home (see note on verse 7) incited the king of Judah to take some revenge on Israel. In 2 Chronicles (xxv. 13) we read that these men 'fell upon the cities of Judah, from Samaria even unto Beth-horon, and smote three thousand of them and took much spoil'. The 'three thousand' of course means 'of the inhabit-

Jehoahaz son of Jehu, king of Israel, saying, Come, let us look one another *in* the face. And Jehoash the king of 9
Israel sent to Amaziah king of Judah, saying, The thistle that *was* in Lebanon sent to the cedar that *was* in Lebanon, saying, Give thy daughter to my son to wife: and there passed by a wild beast that *was* in Lebanon, and trode down the thistle. Thou hast indeed smitten Edom, and 10
thine heart hath lifted thee up: glory *of this*, and tarry at home: for why shouldest thou meddle to *thy* hurt, that thou shouldest fall, *even* thou, and Judah with thee? But Ama- 11
ziah would not hear. Therefore Jehoash king of Israel

ants'. If this attack occurred while Amaziah was on his expedition against Edom, we can better understand his action.

Come, let us look one another in *the face*] A figurative expression equivalent to 'Let us measure swords', let us test each other's power. It was under all circumstances rash for the smaller power, the king of two tribes, to challenge the king of ten. Moreover if Amaziah had been victorious over Edom, Jehoash had repulsed the Syrians and recovered those portions of the land which had been lost in the time of Jehoahaz.

9. *the thistle...sent to the cedar*] What Jehoash wishes to convey is that he feels himself utterly Amaziah's superior, and that he can take no notice of his message. This he does by an apologue (cf. Jud. ix. 8—15) in which he speaks not of war but of marriage. The application is however quite clear. The thistle, who asks for the daughter of the cedar, is trodden down by some passing beast and perishes unregarded, while the cedar stands unharmed. Words could hardly convey more strongly the low opinion which Jehoash entertained of Amaziah's power.

10. *and thine heart hath lifted thee up*] The more usual expression is that 'the heart is lifted up'. Cf. Deut. viii. 14; xvii. 20; 2 Chron. xxvi. 16; Ezek. xxviii. 2. But when the heart is lifted up, the whole spirit of the man soars toward lofty aims.

glory of this] R.V. **glory thereof**. i.e. Of the Edomite conquest.

tarry [R.V. **abide**] *at home*] The change is to harmonize with the rendering in 2 Chronicles.

why shouldest thou meddle to thy *hurt*] The 'meddling' implied by the verb is generally the meddling of contention. Cf. Deut. ii. 9 where the A.V. has 'contend not with them', and in verses 5 and 19 of the same chapter, where the same word occurs, the R.V. has adopted 'contend' instead of 'meddle'. The order is there given in respect of those nations whom the Israelites are charged to let alone. Hence in this verse R.V. has on the margin 'provoke not calamity'. Calamity is thus viewed as an enemy, with whom Amaziah was unwisely venturing to go to war.

11. *But Amaziah would not hear*] Bearing out the proverb 'Quem Deus vult perdere prius dementat'.

Jehoash king of Israel went up] When the king of Israel saw that

went up; and he and Amaziah king of Judah looked one another *in* the face at Beth-shemesh, which *belongeth* to
12 Judah. And Judah was put to the worse before Israel; and
13 they fled every man to their tents. And Jehoash king of Israel took Amaziah king of Judah, the son of Jehoash the son of Ahaziah, at Beth-shemesh, and came *to* Jerusalem, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem from the gate of
14 Ephraim unto the corner gate, four hundred cubits. And

Amaziah would persist, he apparently made the first movement. For Beth-shemesh, where the engagement took place was in Amaziah's territory, on the northern boundary of Judah. Jehoash therefore never allowed the army of Judah to enter the land of the Israelites.

Beth-shemesh] The name signifies 'house of the sun' and may contain some allusion to ancient idolatrous worship which prevailed there. (Cf. Jerem. xliii. 13.) The place is mentioned before this time as that to which the ark was brought when it was sent home by the Philistines (1 Sam. vi. 9, 12). It was one of the cities allotted to the priests, and in 1 Kings iv. 9 it is among the places selected for commissariat cities by Solomon. In the later history we find that the Philistines obtained possession of it (2 Chron. xxviii. 18).

12. *every man to their tents*] See above on xiii. 5.

13. *took Amaziah*] i.e. Took him prisoner. And there is some difficulty in deciding what became of Amaziah at this time and afterwards. In 2 Chronicles xxv. 23 it is added that Jehoash brought him to Jerusalem, and the *Kethîb* (=they came) in this verse is intended to give that idea. Both A.V. and R.V. have translated the *Keri* (=he came). Josephus (*Ant.* IX. 9. 3) has given an account which makes Amaziah be brought as a captive into his own capital. 'When the troops (of Judah) were scattered in alarm, Amaziah was left alone and was taken prisoner by the enemy. Then Jehoash threatened to put him to death unless he persuaded the people of Jerusalem to open their gates and admit him with his army into the city. And Amaziah through necessity and in fear for his life caused the enemy to be received. And Jehoash having broken down about four hundred cubits of the walls, drove in his chariot through the opening into Jerusalem, bringing Amaziah as his prisoner.' This is a picture in which the imagination has added to the details of the sacred narrative. Yet the very formal way in which Amaziah is mentioned in this verse, both here and by the Chronicler, as 'Amaziah king of Judah, the son of Jehoash the son of Ahaziah', seems to indicate that some crisis in the reign of this king is marked by the defeat at Beth-shemesh. Perhaps he was kept a prisoner till the death of Jehoash. The way in which it is said in verse 17 that Amaziah *lived* (not *reigned*) after the death of Jehoash, seems also, from its unusual nature, to mark an exceptional state of things.

from the gate of Ephraim] This portion of the wall was on the north of the city, opening towards the kingdom of Israel, and the demolition of a large part of the wall on that side was meant to leave the city

he took all the gold and silver, and all the vessels that were found *in* the house of the LORD, and in the treasures of the king's house, and hostages, and returned to Samaria. Now 15
the rest of the acts of Jehoash which he did, and his might, and how he fought with Amaziah king of Judah, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? And Jehoash slept with his fathers, and was buried in 16
Samaria with the kings of Israel; and Jeroboam his son reigned in his stead.

And Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah lived after 17
the death of Jehoash son of Jehoahaz king of Israel fifteen years. And the rest of the acts of Amaziah, *are* they not 18
written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

exposed to the entry of the Israelites if they were desirous to come in. The gate was where now is 'the Damascus gate'.

14. *and he took all the gold and silver*] The conquest appears to have been most complete. The Chronicler mentions the name of Obed-edom as the man who had charge at this time over the treasures of the house of the Lord.

and hostages] R.V. **the hostages also.** As in Chronicles. There is no other mention in the sacred history of persons taken as pledges for the fulfilment of the conditions of a peace. This circumstance marks the occasion as of unusual character, and makes it clear that terms were exacted from Amaziah for which the king of Israel held some distinguished persons of Judah, perhaps sons of the king, as security till they were fulfilled.

and returned to Samaria] Having so disposed the affairs of the southern kingdom as to secure the peace of his own, and probably having made it clear to the people of Judah that there was no hope for better days while Amaziah was their king.

15. *the rest of the acts of Jehoash*] The repetition of this sentence, which had been given in nearly the same terms in xiii. 12, shews us that the compiler probably used two documents, and copied from one in the former chapter, and from the other here. The words of this chapter are more in accord with the usual formula. In xiii. 13 the expression 'and Jeroboam sat upon his throne' is not so common as 'Jeroboam his son reigned in his stead'.

17—22. CLOSE OF THE REIGN OF AMAZIAH. HE IS SLAIN BY HIS SUBJECTS. SUCCESSION OF AZARIAH IN JUDAH. (2 Chron. xxv. 25—28; xxvi. 1—2.)

17. *Amaziah...lived after the death of Jehoash*] It has been already noticed that this is not the usual way in which the continuance of a king's reign is described. It may be that while Jehoash was on the throne of Israel Amaziah was kept in subjection, if not a prisoner, and even after that never came again to the full enjoyment of his power.

19 Now they made a conspiracy against him in Jerusalem: and
he fled to Lachish; but they sent after him to Lachish, and
20 slew him there. And they brought him on horses: and he
was buried at Jerusalem with his fathers in the city of
21 David. And all the people of Judah took Azariah, which
was sixteen years old, and made him king instead of his

19. *Now* [R.V. **And**] *they made a conspiracy*] This was evidently the work of his own subjects. The Chronicler's statement is that the conspiracy was commenced 'after the time that Amaziah did turn away from following the Lord'. But this we see was immediately after the conquest of the Edomites, when the king 'brought the gods of the children of Seir' into the land. There must then have been a feeling of hostility to Amaziah among the right-minded of his own people, even before the battle of Beth-shemesh. We cannot tell whether the conspiracy came to a head in a short time, or only gained strength when the forces of Judah had been so thoroughly overcome by the northern army. But everything points to a desire on the part of the people of Judah to put down Amaziah on the first possible opportunity.

and he fled to Lachish] Lachish was considerably south of Jerusalem, and Amaziah probably thought that from it he could more easily escape to Edom, or elsewhere, out of harm's way. The place must have been of the nature of a fortress. For when the Israelites entered Canaan it had a king of its own, who joined in the league for the chastisement of the Gibeonites. The king is described as belonging to the Amorites who dwell in the mountains, so that it must have been in a hilly country (Josh. x. 6). We may note also that this city was made one of his fortresses by Rehoboam after the revolt of the ten tribes (2 Chron. xi. 9). Hence Amaziah after he escaped thither may have remained in security and held this place against the conspirators for a considerable time, living indeed, but hardly to be said to be reigning.

they sent after him] But we may conclude that his pursuers were not allowed to seize him without some resistance, which may have lasted a considerable time.

20. *they brought him on horses*] Perhaps this means that they used Amaziah's own chariot to convey the dead body to the royal city. 'Horses' in the plural number usually implies a chariot. There was clearly no desire on the part of the conspirators to offer any indignity to the king's dead body. 'The city of David' here spoken of is called strangely in 2 Chron. xxv. 28 'the city of Judah'.

21. *All the people of Judah took Azariah*] The people were all of one mind. They had rid themselves of the idolatrous father, but there was hope in the sixteen year old son. In Chronicles the name of this king is spelt *Uzziah*. This variation also occurs in the next chapter of 2 Kings (xv. 13, 30, 32, 34). With this may be compared *Azareel* (1 Chron. xxv. 18), which is found in verse 4 of the same chapter to be the person who is also called *Uzziel*. There is not much difference in the signification of the two forms.

father Amaziah. He built Elath, and restored it to Judah, 22
after that the king slept with his fathers.

In the fifteenth year of Amaziah the son of Joash king of 23
Judah Jeroboam the son of Joash king of Israel *began* to
reign in Samaria, *and reigned* forty and one years. And he 24
did *that* which *was* evil in the sight of the LORD: he departed
not from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who
made Israel to sin. He restored the coast of Israel from 25
the entering of Hamath unto the sea of the plain, according

22. *He built Elath*] Elath (also written *Eloth*) was at the northern extremity of the Gulf of Akabah. It is said in 1 Kings ix. 26 to have belonged to Edom, but at this time Judah was powerful enough to secure a road through Edom for trade purposes, and so extend the sway of their kingdom to the same point southward which they had occupied in the days of Solomon. Between that time and this, Elath had most likely fallen into decay. Hence the mention of 'building', which of course means restoration. (See on xv. 35.)

and restored it to Judah] As it had been in the days of Solomon. We need not suppose that more was done than to secure a passage through Edom between Elath and Jerusalem. Edom was of small use to Judah, but a port on the Red Sea was a great acquisition.

after that the king slept with his fathers] This is another of those vague notices which indicate an unusual state of things in Judah at this period. It would almost seem as though Azariah had been put in authority, if not on the throne, before the death of his father, and that he had been making his plans beforehand, only waiting for his father's death to carry them out. He was without doubt a popular monarch, for it is said (verse 21) that all Judah agreed on him for king.

23—29. ACCESSION OF JEROBOAM II. KING OF ISRAEL. HIS CONQUESTS AND DEATH. (Not in Chronicles.)

23. *In the fifteenth year of Amaziah*] Cf. verses 1 and 17. Amaziah reigned 29 years, and he lived 15 years after the death of Jehoash king of Israel. Therefore the numbers are in sufficiently close agreement, though we cannot be certain of the position which Amaziah occupied after his defeat by Jehoash at the battle of Beth-shemesh.

24. *who made Israel to sin*] R.V. **wherewith he made** &c. As before.

25. *He restored the coast of Israel*] Here, as before, 'coast' has no reference to 'seaboard'. The territory which Jeroboam recovered was on the east of the Jordan, and so what is meant is that he acquired again the portions of Gilead and Bashan that had been lost under previous kings.

from the entering of Hamath] R.V. **entering in of H.** This rendering is as in A.V. of 1 Kings viii. 65 and elsewhere. The 'enter-

to the word of the LORD God of Israel, which he spake by the hand of his servant Jonah, the son of Amittai, the pro-
26 phet, which *was* of Gath-hepher. For the LORD saw the affliction of Israel, *that it was* very bitter: for *there was* not
27 any shut up, nor any left, nor any helper for Israel. And

ing in of Hamath' or 'as men come to Hamath' is frequently mentioned as a northern limit of the Israelite territory, Hamath being a chief city of Syria and under the rulers of Damascus. Cf. Num. xiii. 21; xxxiv. 8; Josh. xiii. 5; Jud. iii. 3.

unto the sea of the plain] R.V. **of the Arabah.** The sea of the Arabah is the Dead Sea. Cf. Deut. iii. 17; iv. 49; Josh. iii. 16; xii. 3. The Arabah is the name given to the valley from the Sea of Galilee southward to the desert. The name is found in A.V. in Josh xviii. 18, and has been introduced as a proper name in the R.V. constantly. The sea of the Arabah is defined in Josh. iii. 16 as 'the salt sea'. The district restored by Jeroboam was on the east of the Jordan, and extended from the valley of the Orontes where Hamath was situated, southward to the frontiers of the Moabites.

the Lord God of Israel] R.V. **the God of I.** As usual.

his servant Jonah, the son of Amittai] This must be the same person to whom the prophecy of Jonah is ascribed, for it is impossible to believe that there were two persons of this name, both prophets and both sons of Amittai. Jonah must therefore have prophesied before (or early in) the reign of Jeroboam II., the commencement of whose reign is placed about B.C. 823. Thus Jonah must be the earliest of those prophets, whose writings have been preserved. That there is nothing in the book of Jonah about the prophecy mentioned in this verse need not surprise us. That book is very brief and deals with but one episode in the prophet's life. Yet a prophet, whose ministry God employed about distant Nineveh, may certainly be expected to have had messages also for his own countrymen. Hosea (i. 1) and Amos (i. 1) also prophesied in the days of Jeroboam II.

which was *of Gath-hepher*] The same place is called Gittah-hepher in Josh. xix. 13. It was not far from Nazareth in the tribe of Zebulon. Jonah therefore was a prophet of the northern Kingdom. Jewish tradition makes him to have been the son of the widow of Zarephath, whom Elijah restored to life, and says also that it was he who attended Elijah when he set forth into the wilderness, and who was sent to anoint Jehu. All which things have no foundation but conjecture.

26. *the affliction of Israel*] Occasioned by the inroads of the Syrians, who had not only conquered the lands on the east side, but also at one time some considerable portions on the west of the Jordan. (Cf. above xiii. 3, 7.)

for there was *not any shut up, nor any left* [R.V. adds **at large**] *nor* [R.V. **neither was there**] *any helper*] For the change cf. 1 Kings xiv. 10 *note*. The expression means that there was no one, great or small, young or old, to whom they could look for aid.

ASSYRIA, ARMENIA, SYRIA,
AND THE ADJACENT LANDS.
Region desolated by Tiglath Pileser (2 Kings XV. 29) . . . Brown tint
" " Shalmaneser & Sargon (2 Kings XVII. 6; XVIII. 9-11) Green "
" " Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings, XXIV.) . . . . . Yellow "
English Miles.
0 50 100 150 200 250
Longitude East from Greenwich
ARMENIA
ASSYRIA
MEDIA
BABYLONIA
Chaldea
Elymais
Elam
SUSIANA
PERSIA
GULF
GREAT SEA
Arabian Desert
Mt Ararat
Mt Taurus
Mt Lebanon
Mt Carmel
Mt Sinai
Mt Hor
Mt Nebo
Mt Orontes
Mt Zagros
Euphrates
Tigris
R. Jordan
R. Arpad
R. Chaboras
R. Ulai
R. Choaspes
R. Gyndes
R. Kerkhah
R. Karun
R. Kur
R. Araxes
R. Gihon
R. Abana
R. Pharpar
R. Kishon
R. Besor
R. Arnon
R. Zered
R. Zerka
R. Kebar
R. Habor
R. Gozan
R. Euphrates
R. Tigris
R. Jordan
R. Choaspes
R. Ulai
R. Gyndes
R. Kerkhah
R. Karun
R. Kur
R. Araxes
R. Gihon
R. Abana
R. Pharpar
R. Kishon
R. Besor
R. Arnon
R. Zered
R. Zerka
R. Kebar
R. Habor
R. Gozan
Lake Van
Lake Urumiah
Lake Asphaltites
Lake Gennesareth
Lake Aram
Lake Shur
Lake Hamath
Lake Merom
Lake Sea of Galilee
Lake Dead Sea
Lake Lake Urumiah
Lake Lake Asphaltites
Lake Lake Gennesareth
Lake Lake Aram
Lake Lake Shur
Lake Lake Hamath
Lake

the LORD said not that *he* would blot out the name of Israel from under heaven: but he saved them by the hand of Jeroboam the son of Joash. Now the rest of the acts of 28
Jeroboam, and all that he did, and his might, how he warred, and how he recovered Damascus, and Hamath, *which belonged* to Judah, for Israel, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? And 29
Jeroboam slept with his fathers, *even* with the kings of Israel; and Zachariah his son reigned in his stead.

In the twenty and seventh year of Jeroboam king of 15

27. *And the Lord said not*] i.e. As yet the doom of Israel was not fixed. There was yet a place of repentance left.

but he saved them] Jeroboam was the saviour spoken of in xiii. 5. See note there.

28. *how he recovered Damascus*] We are told (2 Sam. viii. 6) that garrisons were placed in Damascus by David, and that the Syrians became servants to David. Having been once in the possession of the Israelites, the reconquest by Jeroboam II. may be spoken of as a recovery. A sort of occupation of Damascus was also granted by Ben-hadad to Ahab (1 Kings xx. 34), when the Israelite king was permitted to make streets for himself in the Syrian city.

and Hamath, which belonged [R.V. had belonged] *to Judah*] We find (2 Sam. viii. 9—11) that Toi the king of Hamath was one of David's tributaries, and from 1 Kings iv. 21—24 it is clear that in Solomon's days Hamath was part of his possessions. In 2 Chron. viii. 4 we learn that Solomon built 'store cities' in Hamath. The revolt of the ten tribes gave Hamath a chance of freedom again, of which the people probably availed themselves, and remained independent till the conquest by Jeroboam here spoken of. This event brought the city into the hand of Israel.

29. *Zachariah* [R.V. **Zechariah**] *his son*] This was the fourth in descent from Jehu, and according to the promise of God (2 Kings x. 30) that family was allowed so long a rule, but now the dynasty came to an end.

CH. XV. 1—7. REIGN OF AZARIAH KING OF JUDAH. HE IS SMITTEN WITH LEPROSY AND LIVES APART. HIS DEATH. (2 Chron. xxvi. 1—23.)

1. *In the twenty and seventh year of Jeroboam*...began *Azariah*] This statement cannot be made to accord with the numbers given in the previous chapters. In xiv. 1 it is said that Amaziah the father of Azariah began to reign in the second year of Joash king of Israel. Now Joash (xiii. 10) reigned sixteen years. Therefore he lived fourteen years contemporary with Amaziah. And the latter lived (xiv. 17) after Joash's death fifteen years more. Hence his whole reign was twenty-nine years. Again in the fifteenth year of Amaziah, Jeroboam II. began

Israel *began* Azariah son of Amaziah king of Judah to reign.
2 Sixteen years old was he when he *began* to reign, and he
reigned two and fifty years in Jerusalem. And his mother's
3 name *was* Jecholiah of Jerusalem. And he did *that* which
was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his
4 father Amaziah had done; save that the high places were
not removed: the people sacrificed and burnt incense still

to reign (xiv. 23). Hence Amaziah must have died and Azariah ascended the throne of Judah in the fourteenth or fifteenth year of Jeroboam, and not in the twenty-seventh as here stated. The explanation given in the margin of A.V. that the twenty-seven years are made up of the time when Jeroboam reigned alone, and several years in which he was consort with his father in the kingdom while Joash was engaged in the Syrian wars has nothing in Scripture to warrant it. Nor does it seem to have been the custom for a king to make his son partner in the sovereignty. If in any case such a plan had been resorted to, it would surely have been adopted when this king Azariah became a leper. But while it is expressly stated, in verse 5 below, that the king's son Jotham was set over the household and judged the people of the land, there is no mention of a co-regency. The numbers in the verse before us present a difficulty which has not yet been solved.

Azariah] In verses 13, 30, 32 and 34 of this chapter called *Uzziah*. On this change cf. xiv. 21 note.

2. *his mother's name* was *Jecholiah*] R.V. **Jecoliah.** This is the form in 2 Chron. xxvi. 3.

3. *he did* that *which* was *right in the sight*] R.V. **eyes.** i.e. His obedience to God's law was partial, like that of his father, for he also allowed the high-places to remain and to be used for worship: and the close of Azariah's reign was marked by further falling away, just as Amaziah's had been before.

4. *save that* [R.V. **Howbeit**] *the high places*] The rendering is thus made to agree with verse 25 of this chapter, where the Hebrew is the same. The Chronicler at this point supplies us with many particulars of Azariah's history unnoticed in Kings. Azariah, he says, 'sought God in the days of Zechariah', a prophet, who appears to have been the king's counsellor. He made war with success upon the Philistines, the Arabians and the Mehunim. The Ammonites became tributary to him, and he fortified Jerusalem. He built many towers, and digged many wells, had much cattle and many labourers in husbandry, 'for he loved husbandry'. He had also a large and well-ordered army of more than three hundred thousand men, and at their head were two thousand six hundred mighty men of valour. The king provided largely for their equipment with both defensive and offensive armour, and he also contrived many cunning engines of war, so that 'his name spread far abroad, for he was marvellously helped till he was strong'.

on the high places. And the LORD smote the king, so that 5
he was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a
several house. And Jotham the king's son *was* over the
house, judging the people of the land. And the rest of the 6
acts of Azariah, and all that he did, *are* they not written in

5. *And the Lord smote the king, so that he was a leper*] The more political history in Kings tells us nothing about the reason why Azariah was smitten. The Chronicler however says that the king's successes caused his heart to be lifted up, and he presumed to go into the temple, and to take upon him the priest's office of burning incense. He was withstood by the priest (also called Azariah) and by fourscore other priests, but in his anger he persisted, and then it was that the leprosy rose up in his forehead. Whereupon he hasted to go forth from the temple because the Lord had smitten him.

and dwelt in a several house] The noun here is connected with the adjective that signifies 'free' and which is used of manumitted slaves. It has been suggested that the meaning here is that the place was one where those lived who could no longer mix with their fellows, and take part in the ordinary business of life. But in that case the building would be a public one or it would not have been so called. It appears therefore better to consider that the house was 'free' in the sense of 'standing apart', not mixed up among other dwellings. It was perhaps some place in the country to which the king confined himself after the disease had broken out upon him. The R.V. gives 'lazar-house' on the margin, but we must not suppose that the king went into a home devoted to such sufferers. He would live alone. The LXX. makes a sort of transliteration of the word but does not translate. The Vulgate has *in domo libera seorsum.*

For the English word 'several' in the sense of 'separate', cf. Pilkington's Works (*Parker Society*) p. 64 where the author speaks of people 'buried not in hallowed churchyards by any bishops, but in a *several* place appointed for the same purpose without the city', and further down on the same page he describes a burial-ground as 'an honest place to be kept *several* from beasts and unreverent using the same'.

the king's son was *over the house*] R.V. **household.** From 1 Kings iv. 6 where Ahishar is spoken of as being over Solomon's household, and 2 Kings xix. 2 where the same office is assigned to Eliakim in the time of Hezekiah, it is clear that the post was one of great dignity, but it was in no way connected with a regency. Eliakim is mentioned as the most prominent person among those who were sent to confer with Rabshakeh, and to consult the prophet Isaiah, but the duties he performed were those of a subject. And though Jotham is here said to have judged the people of the land, we cannot from this conclude that he was joint ruler with his father.

6. *the rest of the acts of Azariah*] The record of these is said by the Chronicler (2 Chron. xxvi. 22) to have been written, first and last, by Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz. We know from Is. vi. 1 that

7 the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? So Azariah slept with his fathers; and they buried him with his fathers in the city of David: and Jotham his son reigned in his stead.

8 In the thirty and eighth year of Azariah king of Judah did Zachariah the son of Jeroboam reign over Israel in
9 Samaria six months. And he did *that* which *was* evil in the sight of the LORD, as his fathers had done: he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made
10 Israel to sin. And Shallum the son of Jabesh conspired

the great vision of the Lord in His glory was seen by Isaiah in the year of Azariah's death, so that the prophet was living at the time when the history of the reign was completed, and we can see from other notices that the prophets not unfrequently became the historians of the period in which they lived. Cf. 1 Chron. xxix. 29; 2 Chron. ix. 29; xii. 15; xiii. 22; xx. 34; xxvi. 22.

7. *and they buried him with his fathers in the city of David*] His body, as appears from 2 Chron., was not laid with the rest of the kings in the royal sepulchre, but apparently in the same piece of land. 'They buried him with his fathers in the field of burial which belonged to the kings: for they said; He is a leper'.

Jotham his son reigned] We can scarcely suppose that this notice would have been thus set down in the ordinary formula after Azariah's death, if Jotham had been joint ruler all the time of his father's leprosy. The smiting of the king must have been in the latter part of his reign. The conquests, buildings, agriculture, and military organization described by the Chronicler (see above on verse 4) must have needed many years to bring to the perfection they attained. Therefore, though Azariah's reign was fifty-two years long, we need not think of him as a leper for more than the last ten years. As Jotham succeeded his father at twenty-five he would only have been fifteen when he was placed over the household. This may perhaps make ten years appear too long a time to assign to his father's leprosy.

8—12. ZECHARIAH KING OF ISRAEL. HE IS SLAIN, AFTER SIX MONTHS, BY SHALLUM, WHO SUCCEEDED HIM. (Not in Chronicles.)

8. *Zachariah* [R.V. **Zechariah**] *the son of Jeroboam*] This was as is noticed below, in verse 12, the fourth generation of the family of Jehu. The sovereignty had been promised them no longer.

9. *who* [R.V. **wherewith he**] *made Israel to sin*] And the same change is necessary in verses 18, 24 and 28 of this chapter.

10. *Shallum the son of Jabesh*] Nothing more is known of him than is given in this verse. The death of the last scion of the house of Jehu by the sword appears to be foretold in Amos vii. 9, 'I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword'.

against him, and smote him before the people, and slew him, and reigned in his stead. And the rest of the acts of 11
Zachariah, behold, they *are* written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel. This *was* the word of the 12
LORD which he spake unto Jehu, saying, Thy sons shall sit on the throne of Israel unto the fourth *generation*. And so it came to pass.

Shallum the son of Jabesh *began* to reign in the nine and 13
thirtieth year of Uzziah king of Judah; and he reigned a full

before the people] i. e. Publicly. Hence it would seem that the conspiracy of Shallum had large popular support. But the LXX. here has plural verbs '*they* conspired', '*they* smote' and '*they* slew' and writes the two words translated 'before the people' as though they were one proper name Κεβλαὰμ. Hence some have thought that Shallum had a fellow-conspirator of whom this was the name. The words occur in such a combination and sense nowhere else, and the preposition, rendered 'before', is not found except in the Chaldee portions of the Old Testament. But there is nothing in the Hebrew to warrant the changes of the LXX., though Ewald, and after him the late Dean Stanley, adopted them as representing a more correct text. Stanley says (*Jewish Church* ii. 308) 'Zechariah was, it would seem, succeeded by a king, whose very name is almost lost to us, Kobolam, and Kobolam was succeeded by Shallum'. There needs a great deal of manipulation of even the text of the LXX. to extract any such statement from it. A much more reasonable conjecture is to make Κεβλαὰμ (though found nowhere else) the name of the place where Zachariah was murdered.

11. *And* [R.V. **Now**] *the rest of the acts of Zachariah*] We can see from the language of the prophet Amos that the corruption of Israel was very great at this time, and that the nation appeared incorrigible. In these excesses Zechariah no doubt bore his share. Hence the shortness of his reign.

12. *the word of the Lord which he spake unto Jehu*] For the promise, see above, x. 30.

thy sons] The R.V. brings the words 'to the fourth generation' forward in the verse and places them after 'sons' thus making the sentence conform, as it does in the original, to the order of the words in the promise (x. 30).

13—15. SHALLUM KING OF ISRAEL. HE IS SLAIN, AFTER A MONTH, BY MENAHEM. (Not in Chronicles.)

13. *a full month*] R.V. **the space of a month.** The margin of A.V. gives, 'Heb. a month of days'. The rendering of R. V. corresponds with that of A.V. in Gen. xxix. 7 for the same words. The Hebrew for 'of days' is added adverbially, as we use 'time' in such phrases as 'in a month's *time*' = 'in a month' 'in a year's *time*' &c.

month in Samaria. For Menahem the son of Gadi went up from Tirzah, and came *to* Samaria, and smote Shallum the son of Jabesh in Samaria, and slew him, and reigned in his
15 stead. And the rest of the acts of Shallum, and his conspiracy which he made, behold, they *are* written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel.
16 Then Menahem smote Tiphsah, and all that *were* therein, and the coasts thereof from Tirzah: because they opened

14. *Menahem the son of Gadi*] It has been suggested that Menahem was an officer of king Zechariah and advanced from Tirzah, where he was stationed, to Samaria to avenge the murder of his master. This may have been so, but if the expression 'before the people' in verse 10 be correct, it would appear as if Zechariah had few to take his part.

Tirzah] Was made a royal residence by Jeroboam I. (1 Kings xiv. 17). The site of Tirzah has not been identified, but its beauty is extolled in Cant. vi. 4. We learn from 1 Kings xvi. 17 that it was a fortress capable of standing a siege, and so may have been a military post, and Menahem an officer there.

and reigned in his stead] These words are not represented in the LXX.

15. *And* [R.V. **Now**] *the rest* &c.] As above in verse 11. It may be noticed that Menahem's conduct in slaying Shallum is not called 'a conspiracy'. Menahem seems to have been a man of much ferocity, and probably carried out his plans without helpers.

16—22. MENAHEM KING OF ISRAEL. HE SMITES TIPHSAH. PUL, KING OF ASSYRIA, COMES AGAINST ISRAEL BUT IS BOUGHT OFF. DEATH OF MENAHEM. (Not in Chronicles.)

16. *Menahem smote Tiphsah*] Tiphsah is mentioned 1 Kings iv. 24 as at one boundary of the dominion of Solomon. The place there intended is Thapsacus on the west side of the Euphrates, and is famous in classic history as the point at which Cyrus with his 10000 Greeks crossed that river. If that be the place here spoken of, we must understand Menahem to have carried his victorious arms from Samaria to the Euphrates. For a king who had put himself on the throne by force, at a time when Israel was thoroughly disorganised, this seems inconceivable. For this reason most people consider the place here mentioned to have been within the kingdom of Israel. Josephus (*Ant.* ix. 11. 1) calls it Thapsa, and speaks of it as a place which refused to admit the usurper. If this be so, it is mentioned nowhere else, and this seems to be by far the most natural explanation.

and the coasts [R.V. **borders**] *thereof*] That is, all the country round about this offending town.

from Tirzah] Menahem's proceeding appears to have been this. After the slaughter of Shallum in Samaria, he returned to Tirzah, and, making that his headquarters, went forth thence to reduce the country to subjection.

they opened not to him] Josephus says they closed their gates and

not *to him*, therefore he smote *it; and* all the women therein that were with child he ript up. In the nine and thirtieth 17
year of Azariah king of Judah *began* Menahem the son of Gadi to reign over Israel, *and reigned* ten years in Samaria.
And he did *that* which *was* evil in the sight of the LORD: 18
he departed not all his days from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin. *And* Pul the king 19
of Assyria came against the land, and Menahem gave Pul a

barred them against him. At a time when the king was changing every few months the citizens might naturally feel unwilling to admit a new claimant for the rule, till they were certain of what was happening elsewhere.

ript up] This savage conduct is mentioned (2 Kings viii. 12) among the enormities which Hazael was likely to perpetrate, and in the prophets (Hosea xiii. 16; Amos i. 13) it is specified as part of the sufferings of Samaria from her invaders, and as inflicted by the Ammonites on the women of Gilead. But nowhere except here do we find such cruelty exercised by an Israelite. It marks the time as one of great degradation and barbarity.

18. *all his days*] These words are unrepresented in the LXX.

19. And *Pul the king of Assyria came against the land*] R. V. **There came against the land Pul** &c. The sentence has no conjunction, and so R. V. represents the original better. In the LXX. we find 'In his days' put as an introduction to the sentence, and the name of Pul represented by Φουὰ, or Φουλὰ or Φοὺλ.

In his work on 'the Cuneiform Inscriptions and the Old Testament', Prof. Schrader (p. 133. Engl. Trans. Vol. 1. p. 230) identifies Pul with Tiglath-pileser, and his grounds for so doing may be thus stated. Azariah king of Judah was a contemporary of Menahem king of Israel (2 Kings xv. 17). The Bible makes them both also contemporaries with Pul king of Assyria, while the inscriptions speak of them as contemporary with Tiglath-pileser the second. In Berosus' Chaldæan history Pul is mentioned as a Chaldæan, Tiglath-pileser in the inscriptions calls himself king of Chaldæa. The name which in Berosus is 'Phulus' appears in the canon of Ptolemy as Πῶρος. This Porus became king of Babylon B.C. 731, in which year we learn from the inscriptions that Tiglath-pileser received homage from the Babylonian king, Merodach-baladan, and became thus lord paramount in Babylon. In the year 727—726 Tiglath-pileser dies, and at the same time a change of ruler takes place in Babylonia by the retirement of Porus. Pul or Por does not appear among the Assyrian kings unless it be under another name, and the only prince with whom the history allows him to be identical is Tiglath-pileser. Pul and Por are really the same name, changed by well-known phonetic laws. Hence it seems not improbable that Pul, Πῶρος, and Tiglath-pileser are names of one and the same person.

Another supposition is that Pul is the name of one of Tiglath-pileser's

thousand talents of silver, that his hand might be with him
20 to confirm the kingdom in his hand. And Menahem exacted the money of Israel, *even* of all the mighty *men* of wealth, of each man fifty shekels *of* silver, to give to the king of Assyria. So the king of Assyria turned back, and
21 stayed not there in the land. And the rest of the acts of Menahem, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the
22 book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? And Menahem slept with his fathers; and Pekahiah his son reigned in his stead.

23 In the fiftieth year of Azariah king of Judah Pekahiah the son of Menahem *began* to reign over Israel in Samaria,

generals, who was in charge of the expedition against Israel. But he is in this verse very expressly called king of Assyria, and the Bible narrative continually makes it clear when an official person, not the king himself, is in command. For an example cf. Isaiah xx. 1.

came against the land] i.e. Was making a hostile advance, and would have invaded Israel but for the bribe.

a thousand talents of silver] This represents a very large sum. Omri only gave two talents of silver (1 Kings xvi. 24) for the ground on which he built Samaria; and in Hezekiah's time the king of Assyria's demands were only for 300 talents of silver and 30 talents of gold (2 Kings xviii. 14). But we can have no doubt from the writings of the contemporary prophets that the northern kingdom was rich at this time. Amos speaks of their houses of ivory (iii. 15), of their houses of hewn stone and their pleasant vineyards (v. 11), how they lay upon beds of ivory, ate of the choicest, had music in their feasts, drank wine in bowls and anointed themselves with the best ointments (vi. 4—6): all indications of excessive wealth.

that his hand might be with him] The desire of Menahem was to secure Pul as an ally, and to gain his help against other adversaries; a very natural aim under the circumstances. To obtain this he no doubt acknowledged the Assyrian as his superior, and did homage to him, as well as paying him this large bribe.

to confirm the kingdom in his hand] These words, which make clear Menahem's object, are unrepresented in the LXX.

20. *Menahem exacted the money*] Fifty shekels=one maneh, was the sixtieth part of a talent of silver. Hence the mighty men of wealth must have numbered 60,000, a number which tells of the richness of the time. The population of Israel in David's time had 800,000 soldiers (2 Sam. xxiv. 9).

stayed not there] He had evidently made his approach to the very border, and perhaps over it.

22. *Pekahiah his son*] Ten years of stern rule had enabled Menahem to secure the throne for his son, though the latter had but a short tenure of power.

and reigned two years. And he did *that* which *was* evil in 24
the sight of the LORD: he departed not from the sins of
Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin. But 25
Pekah the son of Remaliah, a captain of his, conspired
against him, and smote him in Samaria, in the palace of the
king's house, with Argob and Arieh; and with him fifty men
of the Gileadites: and he killed him, and reigned in his
room. And the rest of the acts of Pekahiah, and all that 26
he did, behold, they *are* written in the book of the chroni-
cles of the kings of Israel.

In the two and fiftieth year of Azariah king of Judah 27

23—26. REIGN OF PEKAHIAH KING OF ISRAEL. HE IS SLAIN BY PEKAH, THE SON OF REMALIAH, WHO SUCCEEDS HIM. (Not in Chronicles.)

25. *Pekah...a captain of his*] R.V. **his captain.** The word is the same which in vii. 2 is used for the captain (A.V. lord) on whose hand the king of Israel leaned. Probably Pekah occupied some such position about the king, which gave him the opportunity of attacking his master, for the murder was perpetrated 'in the castle of the king's house'. From the mention of the fifty men of the Gileadites who took part with him in the conspiracy, it has been conjectured that Pekah was himself a native of that wild land, the home in former days of Jephthah and of Elijah. His conduct is of the kind to be expected from one nursed in such wild localities.

in the palace [R.V. **castle**] *of the king's house*] The word is rendered 'palace' everywhere in A.V. except Prov. xviii. 19 'like the bars of a *castle*'. But here and in 1 Kings xvi. 18 (see note there) the sense requires some word expressive of security and protection from a foe. Hence the change in R.V. We know so little of the construction of the royal houses of Israel that it is difficult to be precise about what is meant. But it seems most likely that the king when he knew that Pekah and his fifty comrades were bent on his murder would take refuge in the most fortified place he could reach.

with Argob and Arieh] Doubtless two friends who had remained with Pekahiah to the last.

of the Gileadites] The LXX. has in some MSS. the words ἀπὸ τῶν τετρακοσίων = of the four hundred. I have found no means of explaining the reading. Before 'fifty' in this clause R.V. inserts **were.**

and he killed [R.V. **slew**] *him and reigned in his room*] R.V. **stead.** The words are exactly the same in the original as the closing words of verse 10 above. Both should be alike in the English.

27—31. PEKAH KING OF ISRAEL FOR TWENTY YEARS. INVASION OF ISRAEL BY TIGLATH-PILESER. PEKAH IS SLAIN BY HOSHEA. (Not in Chronicles.)

27. *Pekah the son of Remaliah*] This king is chiefly remarkable

Pekah the son of Remaliah *began* to reign over Israel in
28 Samaria, *and reigned* twenty years. And he did *that* which
was evil in the sight of the LORD: he departed not from the
sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin.
29 In the days of Pekah king of Israel came Tiglath-pileser
king of Assyria, and took Ijon, and Abel-beth-maachah, and
Janoah, and Kedesh, and Hazor, and Gilead, and Galilee,

because of the attempts which he made against the kingdom of Judah, and which gave rise to the prophecies recorded in Isaiah vii.—ix. On the history of these attacks on the sister kingdom, see notes on xvi. 5—9. Isaiah often speaks of Pekah as 'the son of Remaliah' only, without mention of his own name, so that we are led to conclude that Remaliah must have been some well-known person.

29. *Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria*] This is the second Assyrian king of this name; the first having flourished in the twelfth century B.C. For some of the facts connected with his history see note on verse 19 above. According to the Assyrian canon Tiglath-pileser reigned 18 years, from B.C. 745 to B.C. 727, and the conquests mentioned in this verse are supposed to have been made in B.C. 734.

Ijon] In the north of Palestine, in the tribe of Naphtali. It has been mentioned previously (1 Kings xv. 20) as ravaged by Benhadad's captains. The towns here enumerated were exposed to the first attack of any enemy from the north.

Abel-beth-maachah] R.V. **maacah.** This city like Ijon lay in the extreme north of Israel, and was also plundered by Benhadad's officers. It is spoken of as 'a city and a mother in Israel' (2 Sam. xx. 19). It is elsewhere called *Abel-maim.*

Janoah] This place is mentioned nowhere else, and its site has not been determined. But, from the connexion in which it here occurs, it must have been situate in the northern part of the tribe of Naphtali.

Kedesh] This town was one of the cities of refuge, and situate in the tribe of Naphtali. Hence it is called Kedesh-Naphtali (Jud. iv. 6). Here Barak lived, and in later times (1 Macc. xi. 63, 73) it is mentioned as the scene of a battle between Jonathan Maccabæus and the troops of Demetrius. The name indicates that from the first it was a 'holy' place.

Hazor] Another fortified city of the tribe of Naphtali. It stood on the high ground overlooking Lake Merom. It was a very important place before the Israelites entered Canaan (Josh. xi. 10). Jabin was the king thereof whose general Sisera was defeated by Deborah and Barak (Jud. iv. 2, 17). It was strengthened by Solomon for the defence of his kingdom on the north (see 1 Kings ix. 15, note).

Gilead] The mountainous country on the east of the Jordan, extending from Bashan on the north to Moab and Ammon on the south.

Galilee] This name, though afterwards given to a wide district, was

all the land of Naphtali, and carried them captive to Assyria.
And Hoshea the son of Elah made a conspiracy against 30
Pekah the son of Remaliah, and smote him, and slew him,
and reigned in his stead, in the twentieth year of Jotham the
son of Uzziah. And the rest of the acts of Pekah, and all 31
that he did, behold, they *are* written in the book of the
chronicles of the kings of Israel.

In the second year of Pekah the son of Remaliah king of 32
Israel *began* Jotham the son of Uzziah king of Judah to
reign. Five and twenty years old was he when he *began* to 33
reign, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. And his
mother's name *was* Jerusha, the daughter of Zadok. And 34
he did *that* which *was* right in the sight of the LORD: he did

at first only applied to a portion of the country round about Kedesh-Naphtali. In it were the twenty cities which Solomon gave to Hiram king of Tyre, for helping him in his building of the temple, and his own house (1 Kings ix. 11). In the verse before us Galilee must refer only to the northern part of the district afterwards so named.

all the land of Naphtali] We can see, from this addition, where the ravages of Tiglath-pileser were made. He came into the northern portion of Israel on the west of Jordan, and on the east of the river overran a larger district, which from its mountainous character was more sparsely populated and so more easily reduced.

carried them captive to Assyria] This event is placed from the evidence of the Assyrian inscriptions in B.C. 734. To carry away great numbers of the population of a conquered district and settle them elsewhere was frequent with the Assyrian monarchs.

30. *Hoshea the son of Elah*] Josephus (*Ant.* IX. 13. 1) says Hoshea was a friend of Pekah. He is mentioned in the Assyrian inscriptions (Smith, *Assyrian Discoveries*, p. 285), and it appears from that record as if he had been set up by the Assyrian king. Perhaps Hoshea, having conspired and slain Pekah, put himself as a vassal under the protection of Assyria. The inscription speaks of the tribute which he was to pay to the Assyrians. Though the death of Pekah is here mentioned we have a further account of his attempts against Judah in the next chapter.

in the twentieth year of Jotham] As Jotham is said below in verse 33 to have reigned only sixteen years, there must be some mistake in the numbers either here or there. The occurrence of such variations makes the task of fixing the chronology very difficult, and probably no satisfactory solution will be discovered, to the several questions which arise on this subject, until more is known of the contemporary history. If ever the annals of Assyria and Egypt be brought into trustworthy order, the points of contact with Jewish affairs will help to settle some dates and to clear up what seems now irremediably obscure.

35 according to all that his father Uzziah had done. Howbeit
the high places were not removed: the people sacrificed and
burnt incense still in the high places. He built the higher
36 gate of the house of the LORD. Now the rest of the acts of
Jotham, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the
37 book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? In those
days the LORD began to send against Judah Rezin the king
38 of Syria, and Pekah the son of Remaliah. And Jotham slept

32—38. JOTHAM KING OF JUDAH. COMMENCEMENT OF THE PLOTS OF ISRAEL AGAINST JUDAH. (2 Chron. xxvii. 1—9.)

34. *according to all that his father Uzziah had done*] The Chronicler notes the great exception 'Howbeit he entered not into the temple of the Lord'. As this sin of Uzziah had not been recorded by the compiler of Kings, it is natural that he should not allude to it in the notice of Jotham.

35. *Howbeit the high places*] In 2 Chronicles it is merely said 'the people did yet corruptly'.

He built the higher [R.V. upper] *gate of the house of the Lord*] By 'build' is only meant 'restore' or 'beautify'. The gate existed before. The temple stood on a slope, of which the northern side was the highest and the gate on that side was the one of which Jotham made some restoration. The account of his buildings is somewhat fuller in 2 Chronicles. 'On the wall of Ophel he built much. Moreover he built cities in the hill-country of Judah, and in the forests he built castles and towers'. His success in war, also unnoticed by the compiler of Kings, is dwelt on by the Chronicler. He fought with the Ammonites and conquered them, and the children of Ammon paid him in that year a hundred talents of silver, ten thousand measures of wheat, and the same quantity of barley, and they continued the payment for a second and a third year. 'So Jotham became mighty because he prepared his ways before the Lord his God'.

37. *In those days*] In the days of Jotham the confederacy between Israel and Syria against Judah was formed, though the effects were not felt to the full till the days of Jotham's son Ahaz. In Isaiah vii. we find that Rezin king of Syria, and Pekah king of Israel, had come up against Jerusalem to fight against it, and were minded to set up a king in Judah of their own choosing, who is there spoken of as 'the son of Tabeel'. At that time for the consolation and encouragement of Ahaz the oracle concerning 'Immanuel' was sent to him through Isaiah.

the Lord began to send] Though He began to send enemies upon Judah, yet the Lord did not, as Isaiah's prophecy shews us, leave His people without hope, but in the midst of their chastisement He was thinking upon mercy, and spake by the mouth of the prophet concerning that greatest mercy, the sending of His Son.

Rezin the king of Syria] The name of this king appears several times in the Assyrian records. His country had before this time been made

with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David his father: and Ahaz his son reigned in his stead.

16 In the seventeenth year of Pekah the son of Remaliah Ahaz the son of Jotham king of Judah *began* to reign. 2 Twenty years old *was* Ahaz when he *began* to reign, and reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem, and did not *that* which *was* right in the sight of the LORD his God, like David his father. 3 But he walked in the way of the kings of Israel,

tributary to Assyria. The policy of Rezin appears not only to have embraced a conquest of Judah in alliance with Pekah, but also, after making himself more powerful in that way, the shaking off the yoke of Assyria. For this reason the Assyrian power was the more easily induced to help Ahaz in resisting Israel and Syria. The history of that help is given in the next chapter where the acts of Pekah against Judah are more fully dwelt upon.

CH. XVI. REIGN OF AHAZ, KING OF JUDAH. HE REIGNS WICKEDLY. ISRAEL AND SYRIA MAKE WAR UPON JERUSALEM. AHAZ OBTAINS ASSISTANCE FROM TIGLATH-PILESER. (2 Chron. xxviii. 1—21.)

1. *In the seventeenth year of Pekah*] It is clear that some error has crept into the chronological statements of this period. In the previous chapter (xv. 30) we read that Pekah was murdered by Hoshea in the twentieth year of Jotham. From the present verse it seems that Ahaz began to reign, and so Jotham died, before Pekah's death. In reference to Ahaz too the figures are not without some difficulty. He begins his reign at 20 years old and reigns 16 years. But his son Hezekiah (2 Kings xviii. 2) was twenty-five years old at his accession, and so must have been born when Ahaz was not more than eleven.

With reference, however, to the death of Pekah in the reign of Jotham, we see from Is. vii. 1, that Pekah was still alive and conducting operations against Judah in the reign of Ahaz. This agrees entirely with verse 5 of the present chapter. Therefore in any chronological calculation the words of xv. 30 ought to be neglected. It is not easy to explain how the error arose, but it is manifest that there is an error.

2. *and did* [R.V. **he did**] *not* that *which* was *right*] This negative form of statement has not occurred in the account of any previous king of Judah. The offences of Ahaz were exceptional.

3. *he walked in the way of the kings of Israel*] This is more fully explained by the Chronicler, and means that he followed after all kinds of heathen idolatry, not that he introduced the worship of the calves from Israel into Judah. 'He made molten images for the Baalim, and burnt incense in the valley of the son of Hinnom.' 'It is hard not to be infected with a contagious neighbourhood. Whoever read that the kingdom of Israel was seasoned with the vicinity of the true religion of Judah? Goodness, such as our nature is, is not so apt to spread. A tainted air doth more easily affect a sound body, than a wholesome air can clear the sick'. (Bp. Hall.)

yea, and made his son to pass through the fire, according to the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out
4 from before the children of Israel. And he sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places, and on the hills, and under
5 every green tree. Then Rezin king of Syria and Pekah son of Remaliah king of Israel came up *to* Jerusalem to war:
6 and they besieged Ahaz, but could not overcome *him*. At

yea, and made his son to pass through the fire] i.e. To Moloch. Thus introducing into Judah once more, as in Solomon's days (1 Kings xi. 7) the worship of 'the abomination of the children of Ammon'. The words of this verse might be made to refer only to a passing through flame, as a ceremony significant of purification. But the words of the Chronicler are stronger: 'he burnt his children in the fire.' From which it would appear that not one son only was offered. That the children offered in such sacrifices were actually burnt is seen from 2 Kings xvii. 31; Ezek. xvi. 21; and many other passages. But from the words of Ezekiel it may perhaps be inferred that the victims were first slain and then burnt. 'Thou hast taken thy sons and thy daughters whom thou hast borne unto me and these hast thou sacrificed unto them to be devoured...thou hast slain my children and delivered them up in causing them to pass through the fire unto them.'

according to the abominations of the heathen] The word 'abomination' is constantly employed of idols and their worship, their rites being often of the foulest character. The heathen practices of Tyre and Sidon, of the Ammonites, and of the Syrians of Damascus all now found place and worshippers in Jerusalem.

4. *And he sacrificed, &c.*] Hitherto we have heard only that *the people* continued the worship in the high places. Now *the king* takes part in the same, and so makes it doubly popular.

under every green tree] Expressly mentioned (Deut. xii. 2) as among the wrong doings of the heathen: 'Ye shall utterly destroy all the places wherein the nations, which ye shall possess, served their gods, upon the high mountains and upon the hills, and *under every green tree*'.

5. *came up* to *Jerusalem to war*] The plans which had been formed in the reign of Jotham (see xv. 37) were now put into execution. And from Isaiah vii. 2 we can see into what agitation the people of Judah were brought by the advance of the allied enemies. 'It was told the house of David, saying, Syria is confederate with Ephraim (i.e. Israel). And his heart was moved and the heart of his people as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind'.

they besieged Ahaz, but could not overcome him] i.e. They never took Jerusalem (cf. Is. vii. 1). This is the security which Isaiah was instructed to promise to Ahaz. But it is evident from the narrative of the Chronicler that much damage was done in the land by the invasion. He says (2 Chron. xxviii. 5) that Ahaz was delivered into the hand of the king of Syria, who smote him and carried away a great multitude of captives and brought them to Damascus, and he was also delivered into

that time Rezin king of Syria recovered Elath to Syria, and drave the Jews from Elath: and the Syrians came *to* Elath, and dwelt there unto this day. So Ahaz sent messengers to 7

the hand of Pekah king of Israel, who slew in Judah a hundred and twenty thousand men in one day, and carried away captive two hundred thousand, women, sons and daughters, along with much spoil. We can understand the stir caused in Jerusalem by the approach of an army which had already inflicted such blows upon the land.

6. *Rezin...recovered Elath to Syria*] Elath was a place of much importance to the Jews. It was situate at the top of the gulf of Akabah (*sinus Ælaniticus*), and was part of the land of Edom. But when the Edomites were in subjection to Judah, the port was to all intents and purposes a harbour of Judah. Now the Jews were driven from it, and the Syrians came and occupied it, having overrun Edom in their progress towards Elath.

the Syrians came to *Elath*] The LXX. says the 'Idumæans', i.e. the Edomites came to Elath, and this is supported by the marginal reading (*Kerî*) of the Hebrew Bible. But it is a reading which cannot be accepted. The Edomites were at Elath already. It was part of their own land. Therefore they could not be said to come to it. There is very little difference in Hebrew between 'Idumæans' i.e. Edomites, and Aramæans, i.e. Syrians. The latter is ארומים, the former ארומים, a difference only in one letter and that of the slightest kind. Hence the confusion.

and dwelt there unto this day] On this expression as a mark of faithful reproduction by the compiler of what he found in the document he was using, see note on chap. ii. 22.

The Chronicler, before mentioning the appeal of Ahaz to Tiglath-Pileser, which is here related in the next verse, gives an account how the two hundred thousand captives taken by the Israelites (see above on verse 5) were brought to Samaria, and how Oded, a prophet of the Lord, forbad in God's name that the children of Judah and Jerusalem should be kept by Israel for bondmen and bondwomen. Some also among the chief men of Israel declared that the captives should not be brought into Samaria. They were in consequence set free, and, after being fed and clothed, were conducted homeward as far as Jericho. The Chronicler also records the names of the men who thus withstood the bringing in of the Jewish prisoners as if he were taking them from some contemporary record.

7. *So Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria*] According to 2 Chron. (xxviii. 17, 18) it was not only by Rezin of Damascus and Pekah of Israel that Ahaz was straitened when he sent for help to Assyria. 'The Edomites had again come and smitten Judah, and carried away captives. The Philistines also had invaded the cities of the low countries, and of the south of Judah, and had taken Beth-shemesh and Ajalon with Gederoth, and Socho with the villages thereof, and Timnah likewise and Gimzo, and they dwelt there.' So that on north and south alike Ahaz was sorely beset. 'For the

Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, saying, I *am* thy servant and thy son: come up, and save me out of the hand of the king of Syria, and out of the hand of the king of Israel, which
8 rise up against me. And Ahaz took the silver and gold that was found *in* the house of the LORD, and in the treasures of the king's house, and sent *it for* a present to the king of
9 Assyria. And the king of Assyria hearkened unto him: for the king of Assyria went up against Damascus, and took it, and carried *the people of* it captive to Kir, and slew Rezin.

Lord brought Judah low, because of Ahaz, for he made Judah naked, and transgressed sore against the Lord'.

I am thy servant and thy son] Ahaz, in return for the help he seeks, offers to make himself the vassal of Assyria. With the name 'son', as used in such an address, may be compared the 'brother' which Ahab uses of the conquered Benhadad (1 Kings xx. 32). Ahaz in his petition naturally only mentions those enemies on the north upon whom Tiglath-pileser could most readily fall. Perhaps he felt that, if relieved from them, he could dispose of the Edomites and Philistines by his own power.

8. *silver and gold that was found* in *the house of the Lord*] Ahaz appears to have dealt very irreverently with the treasures of the temple. The Chronicler says he 'gathered together the vessels of the house of God and cut in pieces the vessels of the house of God'. This looks as if he melted down the gold and silver to send to Tiglath-pileser.

for *a present*] The word is not that term for present which literally signifies 'blessing' (see note on v. 15). This word has rather the sense of a 'bribe'. In Exod. xxiii. 8 it is 'the *gift* that blindeth the wise'. In Deut. xxvii. 25 it is 'the *reward* taken for slaying the innocent'. In 1 Sam. viii. 3 it is a '*bribe*'. In Ezek. xxii. 12 it is a *gift* taken for shedding blood. So that the *present* of Ahaz is not represented by this word as of a noble character.

9. *the king of Assyria went up against Damascus*] In the Assyrian records it appears that Tiglath-pileser went first against Damascus in B. C. 733, but not being successful came again next year and then reduced the city. (Schrader, p. 152.) Cf. Amos i. 3—5.

the people of *it captive*] See above on xv. 29.

to Kir] The LXX. does not represent these words, and we have no certain data to guide us to the locality intended. Isaiah, who lived close amid all these events, places Elam and Kir in close conjunction (xxii. 6). Elam was in lower Mesopotamia, Kir was therefore most likely in the same district. Rawlinson suggests that it is a variant for *Kish* or *Cush* (Susiana) which was just on the south of Elam.

and slew Rezin] Thus making himself entire master of Syria. Hence, as we see immediately, Tiglath-pileser appears to have stayed some time in Damascus.

And king Ahaz went *to* Damascus to meet Tiglath-pileser 10
king of Assyria, and saw an altar that *was* at Damascus: and
king Ahaz sent to Urijah the priest the fashion of the altar,
and the pattern of it, according to all the workmanship
thereof. And Urijah the priest built an altar according to 11
all that king Ahaz had sent from Damascus: so Urijah the
priest made *it* against king Ahaz came from Damascus.
And when the king was come from Damascus, the king saw 12
the altar: and the king approached to the altar, and offered

10—18. AHAZ GOES TO DAMASCUS. FINDS A HEATHEN ALTAR, THE LIKE OF WHICH HE SETS UP IN THE COURT OF THE TEMPLE. FURTHER DESECRATION OF THE TEMPLE FURNITURE. (2 Chron. xxviii. 22—25.)

10. *king Ahaz went* to *Damascus*] Summoned no doubt by the Assyrian king to make full submission to the power which had relieved him from the attacks of Rezin. 'I am thy servant' was to find expression in more than mere words.

and saw an [R.V. **the**] *altar*] The noun is definite in the original, and probably the most conspicuous and grandest among the altars of Damascus is intended. We know from the story of Naaman that the house of Rimmon was the place to which the Syrian king of that day went to worship. We must think of the most splendid altar in Rimmon's finest temple as the pattern which Ahaz sent home. Either from inclination, or because policy required him to acknowledge the deities of his superior lord, he is reported by the chronicler to have said (2 Chron. xxviii. 23), 'Because the gods of the kings of Syria help them, therefore will I sacrifice to them that they may help me'.

sent to Urijah the priest] This may be the same person who is mentioned by Isaiah viii. 2 as one of the faithful witnesses whom he chose for himself. If this be so, he must have grievously fallen away ere the priest of Jehovah's temple would be agent for the manufacture of an idolatrous altar. Bp Hall says on this, 'Never any prince was so foully idolatrous, as that he wanted a priest to second him. A Urijah is fit to humour an Ahaz. Greatness could never command anything which some servile wits were not ready both to applaud and justify.'

11. *so Urijah...Damascus*] These words are omitted by the LXX. though not in all MSS. Perhaps because the preceding clause ends with the same word as this, the eye of a scribe may have been misled. The part played by Urijah in this business is not mentioned by the Chronicler. The R.V. renders this clause **So did Urijah the priest make it.** This is done to shew that the word 'so' refers to the previous phrase 'according to all that king Ahaz had sent'.

12. *and the king approached to* [R.V. **drew near unto**] *the altar*] The rendering adopted by R.V. is much the most frequent in A.V. Except in this verse 'approach' is not used of 'drawing near' to an altar, but always 'come near' or 'draw near'.

13 thereon. And he burnt his burnt offering and his meat
offering, and poured his drink offering, and sprinkled the
14 blood of his peace offerings, upon the altar. And he
brought also the brasen altar, which *was* before the LORD,
from the forefront of the house, from between the altar and
the house of the LORD, and put it on the north side of the
15 altar. And king Ahaz commanded Urijah the priest, saying,
Upon the great altar burn the morning burnt offering, and

and offered thereon] At such an altar he might be his own priest. The LXX. does not represent these words.

13. *his meat offering*] R.V. **meal-offering**. See above iii. 20 note. The same change is to be made three times over in verse 15 below. The king's wish and order was that not only all his own sacrifices, but all those of the people, should be offered upon the new altar. He did not propose to put down the worship of Jehovah and to substitute any other, but that instead of the altar made according to a divine pattern there should be used one of a fashion which pleased himself, and which would shew to the Assyrians that he was not unfavourable to their divinities.

14. *And he brought &c.*] The R.V. adheres to the Hebrew order. **And the brasen altar which was before the Lord, he brought from the forefront of the house.** This brasen altar is described 2 Chron. iv. 1, its length and breadth being each twenty cubits, and its height ten cubits. It is also mentioned, but not described, 1 Kings viii. 64. This altar, placed in its position when the temple was built, and standing exactly in front of the porch and entrance to the temple, Ahaz now removed.

from between the [R.V. **his**] *altar and the house*] At first the new altar was set a little behind the brasen one, but on the same line as one looked at them from the temple-porch. This arrangement Ahaz changes, and taking away the brasen altar, he leaves his own in the front of the temple, and carries the older and more sacred altar to the north side of the new one. Thus they both stood in a line parallel to the front of the house, but the king's new altar had the place of honour, before the temple-doors.

north side of the [R.V. **his**] *altar*] As before.

15. *Upon the great altar*] By this name he distinguishes his own altar. We know nothing of its dimensions but we need not refer the adjective 'great' to the size of the structure. The king calls it so, because he means it to be the 'principal' altar. The same adjective is used for the 'eldest' among sons, and for the 'chief' among priests.

For an account of the burnt offering, which was accompanied also by a meal offering and a drink offering, see Exod. xxix. 38—42. These burnt offerings were offered, according to the original ordinance, every morning and every evening, and double as much on the Sabbath (Numb. xxviii. 9, 10). It would almost appear that in the time of Ahaz

the evening meat offering, and the king's burnt sacrifice, and his meat offering, with the burnt offering of all the people of the land, and their meat offering, and their drink offerings; and sprinkle upon it all the blood of the burnt offering, and all the blood of the sacrifice: and the brasen altar shall be for me to inquire *by*. Thus did Urijah the 16
priest, according to all that king Ahaz commanded. And 17
king Ahaz cut off the borders of the bases, and removed the laver from off them; and took down the sea from off the brasen oxen that *were* under it, and put it upon a pavement

the Mosaic ritual was relaxed, and the burnt offering made in the morning and the meal offering in the evening. But this is not clear.

the king's burnt sacrifice] R.V. **offering.** The word is the same as in the previous clause, and in that which follows immediately.

all the blood of the sacrifice] The change made in the previous note was most needful, because here we have a different word, and one which is always rendered 'sacrifice'. The distinction between 'burnt offering' and 'sacrifice', of both which all the blood is commanded to be sprinkled on the new altar, is that in the former the whole animal was consumed in the fire, whereas in 'sacrifices', e.g. of peace offerings, only some portion of the victim was burnt, and the other parts eaten by the offerers.

and [R.V. **but**] *the brasen altar shall be for me to inquire* by] No doubt the verb here used is found in the sense of 'to inquire' after God and God's will, as in Ps. xxvii. 4 'to inquire in His temple', though in that verse some render 'to consider' 'to look with pleasure upon'. But Ahaz was not minded to do any such thing. He was casting away Jehovah's worship as fully and as fast as he could. It seems better therefore to render these words 'but as regards the brasen altar it shall be for me to inquire', i.e. I will see later on what shall be done with it. The Vulgate renders '*paratum erit ad voluntatem meam*', i.e. it shall be used as I hereafter decide. So the verb is found in Prov. xx. 25, 'It is a snare...after vows to make inquiry', i.e. to deliberate and consider whether they shall be paid or not. The LXX. has read the verb with different vowel points and renders it 'for the morning' (εἰς τὸ πρωί).

17. *Ahaz cut off the borders of the bases*] For a description of these bases, which were moveable stands to carry the lavers used for the sacrifices, see 1 Kings vii. 27—39. The borders were of highly wrought ornamental work, made by Hiram of Tyre for king Solomon.

removed the laver from off them] i.e. From each of them. There were ten bases, with a laver on the top of each one.

and took down the sea from off the brasen oxen] This sea was also the work of Hiram. See 1 Kings vii. 23—26. It was supported by twelve oxen, three looking each way, and standing with their tails beneath the huge vessel. Ahaz took these beautiful castings away and allowed the sea to rest upon stone supports. As all these acts are in

18 of stones. And the covert for the sabbath that they had built in the house, and the king's entry without, turned he *from* the house of the LORD for the king of Assyria.

the next verse said to be done 'because of the king of Assyria' we may suppose that Tiglath-pileser was disposed to ask for the beautiful things which he saw, and as it was not in Ahaz's power to say him nay, the king removed these treasures that the Assyrian monarch might not see and ask for them.

18. *And the covert* [R.V. **the covered way**] *for the sabbath*] The noun, which occurs nowhere else, signifies some colonnade along which the king could pass when on the sabbath he went to the temple. It is not mentioned in the description of the temple building, and must have been added afterwards, and most likely was richly adorned.

that they had built in the house] i.e. in the temple court, not in the interior of the temple-building.

and the king's entry without] This is perhaps the 'ascent' mentioned 2 Chron. ix. 4 and which called forth the great admiration of the queen of Sheba. We may be sure it was made as beautiful as Solomon's workmen and wealth could make it. This was outside the temple precincts but perhaps was closely joined to the covered way before mentioned so that the whole of the king's progress might be made in private.

turned he from [R.V. **unto**] *the house of the Lord*] There is considerable difficulty in this clause. One thing however is clear, that 'from' cannot be correct. The accusative is the case of direction, and there is no preposition expressed in the original. Hence 'unto' must be the sense. The A.V. seems to have intended to describe the removal or alteration of these two passages so as to separate them from the temple, the R.V., which gives in the margin 'round', appears to imply that both the erections, the one from the palace to the temple area, the other within the court, were brought into closer proximity to the temple-building. But the verb rendered 'turned' signifies 'changed' also, and it seems not unlikely that it refers to an alteration made in these colonnades similar to that which had been made with the bases and the brasen sea. From them all the decorative portion had been taken away lest it should excite the cupidity of the Assyrian. And in the richly decorated ascent and covered way a like dismantling took place and for a like reason. If this be the sense, then 'unto the house of the Lord' must be taken as an adverbial clause explaining that the removal of ornaments and gold took place throughout the whole length, even up to the very temple building.

for [R.V. **because of**] *the king of Assyria*] The preposition = literally 'from the face of' is a form constantly employed after verbs of fleeing (Gen. xvi. 8), of seeking help (Is. xix. 20) and so of fearing, humbling oneself, trembling, &c. This is its sense here. Ahaz did what he did, because he was fearful that otherwise the Assyrian king would seize on all that was choicest. The tribute already claimed had doubtless been large, and the subject monarch though glad of his deliverance from

Now the rest of the acts of Ahaz which he did, *are* they 19
not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of
Judah? And Ahaz slept with his fathers, and was buried 20
with his fathers in the city of David: and Hezekiah his son
reigned in his stead.

Rezin and Pekah, felt that the drain on his resources ought to be allowed to extend no farther, if he could prevent it. We need not suppose that Tiglath-pileser was about to come in person to visit Jerusalem. His emissaries were sure to be there, and the report of existing treasure was sure to give rise to enlarged demands.

19, 20. Death of Ahaz. Hezekiah king of Judah. (2 Chron. xxviii. 26, 27.)

19. *the rest of the acts of Ahaz*] The Chronicler gives us somewhat more detail concerning the doings of this king. 'He gathered together the vessels of the house of God, and cut them in pieces: he shut up the doors of the house of the Lord, and made him altars in every corner of Jerusalem, and in every several city of Judah he made high places to burn incense unto other gods, and provoked to anger the Lord God of his fathers.' Some part of this conduct may have been to satisfy the demands of the conqueror to whom he had become a vassal; but much of it was due to the love for foreign idolatry, for Baal and Rimmon and Moloch and the excesses which attended on their worship.

in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah] In 2 Chron. xxviii. 26 we are referred to the record of Israel as well as of Judah, and the war with Pekah would no doubt form a large chapter in the history of the former kingdom.

20. *was buried with his fathers*] The last three words are not represented in the LXX., and the Chronicler says 'they buried him in the city, even in Jerusalem, but they brought him not into the sepulchres of the kings of Israel.' For bodily leprosy Uzziah had been treated in the same way after death and the moral and spiritual leprosy of the idol-loving Ahaz was worthy of a like deprivation. 'Of all the kings of Judah hitherto, there is no one so dreadful an example, either of sin or judgment, as this son of good Jotham. I abhor to think that such a monster should descend from the loins of David. Where should be the period of this wickedness? He began with the high places...from thence he falls to a Syrian altar, to the Syrian god: then from a partnership, he falls to an utter exclusion of the true God, and blocking up of His temple, and then to the sacrifice of his own son; and at last as if hell were broken loose upon God's inheritance, every several city, every high place of Judah hath a new god. No marvel if he be branded (2 Chron. xxviii. 22) by the spirit of God with "This is that king Ahaz"' (Bp. Hall).

17 In the twelfth year of Ahaz king of Judah *began* Hoshea
the son of Elah to reign in Samaria over Israel nine years.
2 And he did *that* which *was* evil in the sight of the LORD,
3 but not as the kings of Israel that were before him. Against
him came up Shalmaneser king of Assyria; and Hoshea
4 became his servant, and gave him presents. And the king
of Assyria found conspiracy in Hoshea: for he had sent
messengers to So king of Egypt, and brought no present to

CH. XVII. 1—6. REIGN OF HOSHEA KING OF ISRAEL. SHALMANESER INVADES ISRAEL, IMPRISONS HOSHEA AND CARRIES THE PEOPLE CAPTIVE. (Not in Chronicles.)

1. *In the twelfth year of Ahaz*...began *Hoshea...to reign*] This is one more evidence that there is error in the chronological statements. In xv. 30 Hoshea is said to have begun to reign in the twentieth year of Jotham. As in xv. 33 Jotham's reign is stated to have been only sixteen years, the two statements are contradictory. Moreover we find that Pekah was not slain in Jotham's reign, but was an active monarch in the days of Ahaz. The reconciliation of the various statements is full of difficulty. See chronological notice.

2. *but not as the kings of Israel that were before him*] We have no record of the doings of Hoshea, so as to specify in what points he was better than his predecessors. A long persistence in evil doing had however corrupted the whole nation, and the cutting short which had begun under the house of Jehu (x. 32) was now very nearly completed.

3. *Shalmaneser king of Assyria*] This king according to the Assyrian monuments succeeded Tiglath-pileser, and was succeeded by Sargon. His reign lasted from B.C. 727—722.

and Hoshea became his servant] Probably it was in this way that Hoshea made himself strong enough to attack Pekah, and to mount the throne. The wars of Israel in the days of Pekah must have weakened the kingdom excessively, and made external help a necessity for any one who came to the throne.

and gave [R.V. **brought**] *him presents*] The word for 'presents' is that which came to be used for the 'meal-offering' of the Israelites. It is used euphemistically here for a gift which, though given with the appearance of free will, was no doubt compulsory, and of the nature of tribute.

4. *found conspiracy in Hoshea*] No doubt the tributary princes were watched by Assyrian residents in their courts, and the news of negotiations with a foreign power would soon be sent from Samaria to Shalmaneser.

to So king of Egypt] The LXX. writes the king's name Σηγώρ. The identification of this monarch is somewhat doubtful. The most probable supposition is that he is the same with either Shebek or Shebetek, the first and second kings of the Ethiopian twenty-fifth dynasty. By Manetho this king is named Sabachon, and in the

the king of Assyria, as *he had done* year by year: therefore the king of Assyria shut him up, and bound him *in* prison. Then the king of Assyria came up throughout all the land, 5
and went up *to* Samaria, and besieged it three years. In 6
the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away into Assyria, and placed them in Halah

Assyrian records (Smith, *Assyrian Canon*, p. 126) there appears an Egyptian general, whose name is represented as *Sibakhi* or *Sibahe*. He is represented as helping the king of Gaza against Assyria and being overthrown. This may be the person here spoken of. We can see at any rate that Egyptian influence extended as far as Palestine at this period, and therefore that Hoshea might very likely be tempted to seek aid in that quarter in the hope that he would find a less grasping superior lord than Shalmaneser.

and brought [R.V. offered] *no present*] As the word for 'present' here and in verse 3 is the usual one for the 'meal-offering' (see note above) so the verb employed here is that which is constant in the accounts of 'offering' sacrifices. Hence the change. The verb in its application to sacrifices is found Gen. viii. 20; xxii. 2; Exod. xxiv. 5, *et saepe*.

as he had done *year by year*] The LXX. has 'in that year'.

the king of Assyria shut him up] The LXX. gives ἐπολιόρκησεν αὐτόν, i.e. 'besieged him', referring the shutting up to the effect of a siege. But this sense is not warranted by the use of the verb elsewhere. Cf. Jerem. xxxiii. 1; xxxvi. 5; xxxix. 15, which all refer to imprisonment.

5. *throughout all the land*] It seems to have been the usual plan of invaders to overrun the places more easily conquerable before they assailed the chief stronghold.

besieged it three years] Samaria from its position on a hill and from the pains bestowed on its building must have been a city of considerable strength for those days. It seems from the records that the city was not taken by the Assyrians during the reign of Shalmaneser, but in the beginning of the reign of Sargon his successor. See Smith, *Assyrian Canon*, p. 201. In view of this statement the language of the Bible is very remarkable. At the beginning of this chapter the movements are ascribed to Shalmaneser, but in verse 6 it is only said 'the king of Assyria took Samaria'. And when the subject is mentioned again xviii. 9, 10, though stating that 'Shalmaneser came up against Samaria and besieged it', he continues 'and at the end of three years *they* took it', thus, though apparently quite undesignedly, giving support to the chronology which is established by the monuments. See note there.

6. *in Halah*] Most likely this is the district which Ptolemy calls Χαλκῖτις. It lies directly north from Thapsacus between Anthemusia and Gauzonitis.

and in Habor] Habor is the river still known as the *Khabour*, which

and in Habor *by* the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes.

7 For *so* it was, that the children of Israel had sinned against the LORD their God, which had brought them up out of the land of Egypt, from under the hand of Pharaoh
8 king of Egypt, and had feared other gods, and walked in the statutes of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out from before the children of Israel, and of the kings of Israel,
9 which they had made. And the children of Israel did secretly *those* things that *were* not right against the LORD

flows through Gauzonitis, and empties itself into the Euphrates at Circesium. Hence 'on Habor, the river of Gozan', would be a better rendering of the Hebrew. For we do not know of a place called Habor.

by [R.V. **on**] *the river*] There is no preposition in the original, it is therefore better to take 'the river of Gozan' as in apposition with Habor.

7—23. THE SINS FOR WHICH ISRAEL WAS CARRIED INTO CAPTIVITY. (Not in Chronicles.)

7. *For* so *it was that*] R. V. **And it was so because.** A better form of introduction to this account of the causes of the captivity. These are recited under three heads. First, on entering Canaan Israel adopted the idol worship of the people of the land, and would not listen to the warnings of God's prophets. Secondly, the ten tribes made the molten calves, and thirdly, they adopted the worship of Baal and Moloch and other idolatries from the more distant people, and indulged in all the practices of divination and enchantment which were attendant on these heathen forms of worship.

which had [R.V. omits *had*] *brought them up*] This omission makes the clause refer, as it does in the Hebrew, exactly to the same time as 'whom the Lord cast out' in the following verse.

8. *and walked in the statutes of the heathen*] The book of Judges is full of instances of the way in which the people again and again fell away to the practices of the Canaanites (cf. Judges ii. 11—13).

and of the kings of Israel, which they had [R.V. omits *had*] *made*] i.e. In the statutes of the kings of Israel. Such are the ordinances of Jeroboam the son of Nebat about the calves in Dan and Bethel, and the worship of Baal, which Ahab and Jezebel introduced.

9. *And the children of Israel did secretly*] The verb here used occurs nowhere else in the Bible, though one apparently cognate, and differing only by a single letter, is found several times. This latter is used of covering the head, and also of covering walls with gold to look more beautiful than the bare stone would do. From the first notion comes the sense 'they did secretly' which both A.V. and R.V. prefer. Others, with the LXX. (ἠμφιέσαντο), think that the meaning probably is 'they decked out' their worship, employed things alien to the sim-

their God, and they built them high places in all their cities, from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city. And 10
they set them up images and groves in every high hill, and under every green tree: and there they burnt incense in all 11
the high places, as *did* the heathen whom the LORD carried away before them; and wrought wicked things to provoke the LORD to anger: for they served idols, whereof the LORD 12
had said unto them, Ye shall not do this thing. Yet the 13
LORD testified against Israel, and against Judah, by all the prophets, *and by* all the seers, saying, Turn ye from your

plicity of the Mosaic ordinances, *viz.* the high places, pillars and Asherim of which mention is made in the next clauses.

from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city] This seems a sort of proverbial expression. It is found again xviii. 8. The towers, in which watchmen were stationed to keep guard over the flocks and crops, were always in the most lonely and deserted spots, while fenced cities implied the presence of many inhabitants. So the sense appears to be 'in the loneliest as well as in the most populous places'.

10. *images and groves...*] R. V. **pillars and Asherim upon.** On the 'pillars' see note on iii. 2, and on the Asherim, which were probably wooden images of a goddess Asherah, see on xiii. 6.

11. *as* did *the heathen*] R.V. **the nations.** And so again in verse 15. When a distinction is to be marked between God's people and idolaters, 'heathen' is a fair rendering for *goyim*. But here when there is no such marked severance 'nations' is the better translation.

12. *idols, whereof the Lord had said*] The prohibition is given in the Ten Commandments (Exod. xx. 4) and repeated in many parts of the Law (cf. Deut. iv. 16; v. 8; xxvii. 15).

Ye shall not do this thing] The LXX. adds 'unto the Lord' τῷ κυρίῳ. This addition, though unsupported by the Hebrew, is in harmony with Deut. xii. 31, where after a warning against the practices of the heathen, it is added, 'Thou shalt not do so *unto the Lord thy God*'. Cf. also Deut. xii. 4. The golden calves were set up by Jeroboam as a form of worship to Jehovah.

13. *the Lord testified against* [R.V. **unto**] *Israel and against* [R.V. **unto**] *Judah*] The preposition is that which is usually rendered 'in'. And God's witness by His prophets was at first a witness of warning and exhortation, and his anger was long restrained and not at first grievously kindled against them.

by all the prophets, and by *all the seers*] R.V. **by the hand of every prophet and of every seer.** The R.V. has translated the consonants in the word which is rendered by A.V. 'prophets' but has divided them differently. As the A.V. has taken them there is no conjunction 'and' expressed, but by dividing the consonants in a different way the word becomes='prophet and'. Thus the sense and grammar are complete, which they were not before.

Turn ye from your evil ways] For the language cf. Jer. vii. 3;

evil ways, and keep my commandments *and* my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers,
14 and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets. Notwithstanding they would not hear, but hardened their necks, like to the neck of their fathers, that did not believe in the
15 LORD their God. And they rejected his statutes, and his covenant that he made with their fathers, and his testimonies which he testified against them; and they followed vanity, and became vain, and *went* after the heathen that *were* round about them, *concerning* whom the LORD had charged
16 them, that *they* should not do like them. And they left all the commandments of the LORD their God, and made them molten images, *even* two calves, and made a grove, and
17 worshipped all the host of heaven, and served Baal. And

xviii. 11; xxv. 5; xxvi. 13; xxxv. 15. But the same message was in substance preached by every one of the prophets from Samuel to Malachi.

by my servants] R. V. **by the hand of my servants.** As in the earlier part of this verse and again in verse 23, this Hebraism is preserved by the Revisers. It has become so rooted in the Biblical language of our country that there is no need to avoid a literal rendering of it.

14. *hardened their necks*] R. V. **neck.** The original has the singular, the people being regarded as one body. Israel throughout the Scripture is constantly reproached as a 'stiffnecked' people. Cf. Exod. xxxii. 9; xxxiii. 3; Deut. x. 16; Acts vii. 51 and parallel passages.

that did not believe] R.V. **who believed not.** The relative is thus connected a little more clearly with its proper antecedent 'fathers'.

15. *he testified against* [R.V. **unto**] *them*] See above on verse 13.

they followed vanity] 'Vanity' is constantly employed in Scripture of false gods. They are nothing and can do nothing. Therefore to have regard unto them is of no avail, and their worshippers in consequence use prayer in vain to them.

the heathen [R.V. **the nations**] See above on verse 11.

16. *And they left* [R.V. **forsook**] *all the commandments*] The R.V. adopts the most usual rendering of the verb, which is stronger in such a combination than 'left'. It is noteworthy that the sin of the calves is connected with the casting away of all the divine law. As soon as any other object is set up instead of God, all that He values has perished from man's worship.

a grove] R.V. **an Asherah.** See above on verse 10.

and worshipped all the host of heaven] On the temptation to this worship of the heavenly bodies, and its prohibition, cf. Deut. iv. 19; xvii. 3. See also what is said of Hezekiah's and Josiah's reformations. That God's people did fall into this sin we know from

they caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire, and used divination and enchantments, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger. Therefore the LORD was very angry with 18
Israel, and removed them out of his sight: there was none left but the tribe of Judah only. Also Judah kept not the 19
commandments of the LORD their God, but walked in the statutes of Israel which they made. And the LORD rejected 20
all the seed of Israel, and afflicted them, and delivered them into the hand of spoilers, until *he* had cast them out of his sight. For he rent Israel from the house of David; and 21
they made Jeroboam the son of Nebat king: and Jeroboam

Jerem. viii. 2; xix. 13; Zeph. i. 5. Most likely it was introduced through the communications of Ahaz with Assyria.

17. *to pass through the fire*] Of the character of this Moloch-worship, see above xvi. 3, note.

used divination and enchantments] The former word probably refers to some way of seeking out guidance by lots, or by arrows with different marks on them, and the words on the selected one were taken as a direction what to do (cf. Ezek. xxi. 21, 22). The latter word refers to omens derived from sights or sounds. This was the way in which Joseph used his divining cup (Gen. xliv. 5).

sold themselves to do evil] R.V. **that which was evil**. The phrase is used before of Ahab (1 Kings xxi. 25), who had assuredly been the leader of Israel into the worst of their idolatries.

18. *removed them out of his sight*] The language is accommodated to human ideas. God's eye was regarded as specially directed to the land of Canaan, where He had chosen to place His Name. So to be taken away from that land is a removal from His special oversight. By the 'tribe of Judah' is meant the kingdom. Cf. 1 Kings xi. 36.

19. *walked in the statutes of Israel*] Which were not of God's ordinance but of Israel's own devising. This was specially the case when the son of Jehoshaphat intermarried with a daughter of Ahab, and so brought in Baal-worship and its attendant abominations. The calf-worship however seems never to have come across the border, but to have remained in Israel.

20. *And the Lord rejected all the seed of Israel*] The LXX. has 'And they rejected the Lord, and the Lord was angry with all the seed of Israel'.

the hand of spoilers] The first of whom, mentioned below, is Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who led them astray, and the next is the king of Assyria, who carried them captive. There were many spoilers between, but Jeroboam's act began the downward course, which ended in the captivity of Shalmaneser and Sargon.

21. *and Jeroboam drave*] The verb is found only here, but its sense is well established from a cognate verb with slightly different

drave Israel from following the LORD, and made them sin a
22 great sin. For the children of Israel walked in all the sins
of Jeroboam which he did; they departed not from them;
23 until the LORD removed Israel out of his sight, as he had
said by all his servants the prophets. So was Israel carried
away out of their own land to Assyria unto this day.
24 And the king of Assyria brought *men* from Babylon, and
from Cuthah, and from Ava, and from Hamath, and from

orthography. The commencement of the calf-worship was through Jeroboam, and no doubt he used every means in his power to constrain his subjects to follow in his ways. The frequently recurring phrase 'the son of Nebat who made Israel to sin' is justification for even such a strong verb as 'to drive'.

22. *they departed not from them*] For among all the nineteen kings of Israel not one has a good character.

23. *as he had said by all his servants the prophets*] R.V. **as he spake by the hand of all his servants the prophets.** These were probably more numerous, in connexion with the northern kingdom than with the kingdom of Judah, and conspicuous among them were the great figures of Elijah and Elisha. The other prophets of Israel were Ahijah the Shilonite of the land of Ephraim (1 Kings xiv. 4), an anonymous prophet in Beth-el (1 Kings xiii. 11), Micaiah the son of Imlah in Samaria (1 Kings xxii. 10). Elijah was a Gileadite (1 Kings xvii. 1), and Abel-meholah, Elisha's birthplace, was in the tribe of Issachar (1 Kings xix. 16), Jonah was born at Gath-hepher in Galilee in the tribe of Zebulon (2 Kings xiv. 25), Nahum the Elkoshite was of Israel (Nah. i. 1), and probably Hosea also. The prophecy of Amos is concerning Israel, but he was born at Tekoah in Judah.

to Assyria unto this day] See above on ii. 22. The R.V. begins this last clause 'So Israel was' &c.

24—41. OF THOSE NATIONS WHICH WERE BROUGHT TO INHABIT SAMARIA, HOW THEY WERE PLAGUED WITH LIONS. THE MIXED CHARACTER OF THEIR RELIGION. (Not in Chronicles.)

24. *the king of Assyria brought* men *from Babylon*] These would most likely be the leaders of the colony as coming from the capital of the empire.

and from Cuthah] It is not certain what district is intended by this name. Some have thought that the country should be identified with that between the Euphrates and the Tigris, where a town *Cutha* is mentioned by early geographers and from which neighbourhood others of these colonists came. Others think 'Cuthæans' is another form of 'Cossæans', who were a tribe dwelling in the hills between Persia and Media, northward of the river Choaspes. The latter appears the more probable conjecture, but it remains only a conjecture.

and from Ava] R.V. **Avva.** This is without doubt the same place

Sepharvaim, and placed *them* in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel: and they possessed Samaria, and dwelt in the cities thereof. And *so* it was at the begin- 25
ning of their dwelling there, *that* they feared not the LORD: therefore the LORD sent lions among them, which slew *some* of them. Wherefore they spake to the king of Assyria, 26
saying, The nations which thou hast removed, and placed

as *Ivah* (R.V. **Ivvah**) of xviii. 34 below. The place is not clearly identified, but opinions incline to make it the same as *Ahava*, which stood where the modern *Hit* does, on the Euphrates at some distance to the N.W. of Babylon.

and from Hamath] This was the well-known Syrian city on the Orontes, which we read of as recovered by Jeroboam II. (2 Kings xiv. 28, where see note) but which the Assyrians soon afterwards reconquered (2 Kings xviii. 34), and seem now to have brought some of its population southward to Samaria.

and from Sepharvaim] This place is mentioned also in xviii. 34 among cities which had been reduced to subjection by the Assyrians (cf. also xix. 13 and Is. xxxvii. 13). It is identified with the famous town of *Sippara* on the Euphrates, a little distance above Babylon. The LXX. writes the name Σεπφαρουαίμ, which form favours this identification.

instead of the children of Israel] We are not from these words to suppose that all the Israelites were taken away. We know that in the later captivity of Judah, Jerusalem was never wholly left of its old inhabitants. We read in 2 Chron. xxxiv. 9, in the days of Josiah, that there was still 'a remnant of Israel', and these must be taken to be the people left behind when their fellow-countrymen were for the most part carried away.

25. *the Lord sent lions among them, which slew* [R.V. **killed**] some *of them*] The word rendered 'slew' is not the same here as that in the next verse. This statement must be considered as the thought of the people themselves. How far it might also be shared by the writer of Kings we cannot know. These heathen people having regarded their own divinities as especially attached to certain places, would consider that Israel had also its own local deity. Him and His worship they were ignorant of, and when the wild beasts increased upon them it was a natural idea with them to regard the plague as inflicted by the god of the country. That wild beasts were not uncommon in the Holy Land at this period we can see from other places of the history, and when the land was less thickly populated, such beasts as remained would have more chance of multiplying.

26. *they spake to the king of Assyria*] Whose thoughts on such a matter would be in accord with their own, and who would therefore take steps that the colonists should be instructed in the worship of the local deity, as he and they would consider Jehovah to be.

thou hast removed] R.V. **carried away.** For the word in the original

in the cities of Samaria, know not the manner of the God of the land: therefore he hath sent lions among them, and behold, they slay them, because they know not the manner
27 of the God of the land. Then the king of Assyria commanded, saying, Carry thither one of the priests whom ye brought from thence; and let them go and dwell there, and let him teach them the manner of the God of the land.
28 Then one of the priests whom they had carried away from Samaria came and dwelt in Beth-el, and taught them how
29 they should fear the LORD. Howbeit every nation made

is the same which is translated 'carried away' above in verse 11, and a different verb from that which is rendered 'removed' in verse 18.

the manner of the God of the land] i.e. The way in which he would desire to be worshipped. This must vary with the various attributes and characteristics which were assigned to the god of the place.

27. *one of the priests whom ye brought from thence*] The Assyrian king takes what he would believe to be the best step towards remedying the mischief. A priest of the Israelitish worship was clearly the right person to be sent. No doubt all the priests were among the population that had been carried away. Hence the few Israelites left behind would not be regarded as capable of instructing the new colonists. For among the heathen, 'the manner', i.e. the ceremonial and particular observances in performing worship, was the matter of highest import. The less spiritual the worship, the more it tends to lay weight on the 'manner' and mode of the worship. Hence the magnificence so usual in idolatrous countries. The LXX. does not represent the words 'one of the priests'.

let them go] The priest would not be expected to go alone. For such services as the king of Assyria had in his thoughts the person ministering must be attended by a body of minor people to add grandeur to the ceremonies.

and let him teach] The priest would naturally be the teacher. Hence we can see the reason of the change of number in the pronouns in this clause and the last.

28. *Then* [R.V. So] *one of the priests whom they had carried away*] We can see from this that the events here spoken of took place within a very limited time. The priest who had been taken away from Samaria was still alive, and in vigour enough to be selected to go back again and to undertake the office of a teacher among the heathen colonists.

came and dwelt in Beth-el] The place where one of the golden calves had been set up. The worship of these objects would be what the priest taught as the national worship of the ten tribes.

how they should fear the Lord] For the worship of the ten tribes was professedly a worship of Jehovah, though performed in a manner contradictory to His express commandment.

29. *Howbeit every nation made gods of their own*] When they

gods of their own, and put *them* in the houses of the high places which the Samaritans had made, every nation in their cities wherein they dwelt. And the men of Babylon made 30
Succoth-benoth, and the men of Cuth made Nergal, and the men of Hamath made Ashima, and the Avites 31
made Nibhaz and Tartak, and the Sepharvites burnt their

beheld the calves of Dan and Bethel, they would see nothing higher in them than in their own objects of worship. So the adoption of the new form of worship would not draw them from the attachment to their earlier divinities.

the high places which the Samaritans] All was ready for the strangers to set up their idols in every place to which they came.

30. *Succoth-benoth*] This name of the deity of the Babylonians is probably (according to Rawlinson *Herod.* bk. i. p. 630) meant to represent the Chaldæan goddess *Zir-banit*, the wife of Merodach (*i.e.* Bel) who was specially worshipped in Babylon.

Nergal] The Assyrian or Babylonian god who answers to the classic Mars, the god of war. It is an argument for Cuthah being the place near Babylon between the Euphrates and the Tigris (see note on verse 24) that the city which stood there is found to have been specially devoted to Nergal, whose image we are here told was set up in Samaria by the men of Cuth.

Ashima] Jewish tradition explains this name as signifying a short-haired goat. Hence it has been thought that the divinity so called was a sort of oriental Pan, a god of shepherds and of the woods. But others think that in the name there is a trace of the Phœnician god Esmûn, who answers to Æsculapius, the deity that presided over medicine.

31. *And the Avites* [R. V. **Avvites**] *made Nibhaz*] Of Nibhaz (for which the LXX. gives a very different word, Ἐβλαζέρ) nothing is known with certainty. The Jewish commentators explain the word as connected with a root signifying 'to bark', and say that the idol was a human figure with a dog's head. The dog was worshipped, or rather some divinity represented with a dog's head, by the Egyptians. And the want of any better information forces us to be content with supposing that the explanation of the Rabbis may be correct. The varied form of the name in the LXX. seems however to throw doubt on the form *Nibhaz*.

and Tartak] The same Jewish tradition represents Tartak as worshipped under the form of an ass. But there is very little evidence that such a form was used anywhere as a representation of a divinity. The ass in hieroglyphics is the symbol of the Egyptian Typho, but there is no proof that Typho was worshipped under this form. Others suggest that the word is of Persian origin and signifies 'intense darkness'. Thus they arrive at the idea that Tartak represents the planet of ill-luck.

the Sepharvites burnt their children in fire] This was a species of Moloch-worship, and the names given to the divinities indicate this.

children in fire to Adrammelech and Anammelech, the gods
32 of Sepharvaim. So they feared the LORD, and made unto themselves of the lowest of them priests of the high places, which sacrificed for them in the houses of the high places.
33 They feared the LORD, and served their own gods, after the manner of the nations whom they carried away from
34 thence. Unto this day they do after the former manners: they fear not the LORD, neither do they after their statutes,

Adrammelech is explained as the male power of the Sun, and Anammelech as the female power. So that the worship of the Sepharvites would be that of the Sun-god. This agrees with what Berosus (*Frag.* 7) says in explanation of the name Sippara, which is identified with Sepharvaim. He calls it *ἡλίου πόλιν*, the city of the Sun.

32. *So they feared the Lord*] i.e. In the way in which their ideas of the worship of the local divinity demanded. This they did, says Bp Hall, 'not for devotion, but for impunity. Vain politicians to think to satisfy God by patching up religions...What a prodigious mixture was here, true with false, Jewish with paganish, divine with devilish... No beggar's cloak is more pieced than the religion of these new inhabitants of Israel. I know not how their bodies sped for the lions. I am sure their souls fared the worse for this medley. Above all things God hates a mongrel devotion. If we be not all Israel, it were better to be all Asshur. It cannot so much displease God to be unknown or neglected as to be consorted with idols'.

and made unto themselves of the lowest of them priests] R.V. **and made unto them from among themselves priests.** See note on 1 Kings xii. 31. The word represented by 'lowest' means an 'end' or 'extremity', but the idea of the phrase is that the choice of these priests was made anywhere, from the whole mass of the nation, from all that was comprised in it between one extremity and the other. This was distinctly contrary to what the Jews had been taught, that the priests were to come exclusively from one tribe, and the high priests from a special family.

houses of the high places] Hence it seems that not an altar only, but a temple of some kind was erected on the high places.

33. *They feared the Lord*] It seems almost as if the writer had repeated this phrase here and in the previous verse, and afterwards in verse 41, in mockery of this spurious reverence on which Jehovah could set no value.

after the manner of the nations whom they carried away from thence] R.V. **from among whom they had been carried away.** The literal meaning of the latter words is 'from whence [men] carried them away'. The sense of A.V. has been given to the words because it was not noticed that the nominative to the verb was some indefinite noun, 'men', referring to the Assyrian power which had brought these foreigners from their homes and planted them in Samaria.

34. *they fear not the Lord*] i.e. This worship of Jehovah, merely because they regard Him as the local deity of the land, is no worship

or after their ordinances, or after the law and commandment which the LORD commanded the children of Jacob, whom he named Israel; with whom the LORD had made a covenant, 35 and charged them, saying, Ye shall not fear other gods, nor bow yourselves to them, nor serve them, nor sacrifice to them: but the LORD, who brought you up out of the land of 36 Egypt with great power and a stretched out arm, him shall ye fear, and him shall ye worship, and to him shall ye do sacrifice. And the statutes, and the ordinances, and the law, and 37 the commandment, which he wrote for you, ye shall observe to do for evermore; and ye shall not fear other gods. And 38 the covenant that I have made with you ye shall not forget; neither shall ye fear other gods. But the LORD your God 39 ye shall fear; and he shall deliver you out of the hand of all your enemies. Howbeit they did not hearken, but they 40

at all. God will not be served from policy. There need be no difficulty in understanding the words here in contrast to 'they feared the Lord' in verses 32, 33, 41. These latter express what the new colonists thought they were doing, and what they also thought to be enough. This verse expresses what the writer knew to be the truth as God regarded the service.

neither do they after their statutes] 'Their' refers by anticipation to 'the children of Jacob', who are mentioned at the close of the verse.

after the law and commandment] As the preposition is twice expressed in Hebrew, R.V. has **or after the commandment.**

whom he named Israel] See Gen. xxxii. 28.

36. *with great power and a stretched out arm*] R.V. inserts **with** after *and*, as there is the preposition in the original text.

and him shall ye worship] R.V. **and unto him shall ye bow yourselves.** The verb is the same which is so rendered in the verse before.

shall ye do sacrifice] R.V. omits *do*, as it is not given in 35 in the translation of this same verb.

37. *which he wrote for you*] The compiler of Kings considered, as we can gather from this expression, that 'the statutes and ordinances', even the whole Law, was written down for the Israelites, and was of divine origin. The quotations made above are found in Deuteronomy chapters iv., v. and vi. If the compiler be, in this passage, drawing, as he assuredly does in a large part of his work, from a record nearly contemporary with the events, we have here, from some writer of the days of Hezekiah and Isaiah, a number of quotations which shew that, in some form, the fifth book of Moses belongs to a time anterior to the date which recent criticism has assigned to it. If he be here but recording his own ideas, it is manifest that he himself had no doubt about the early origin of the Book.

40. *Howbeit they did not hearken*] From the recital of God's

41 did after their former manner. So these nations feared the LORD, and served their graven images, both their children, and their children's children: as did their fathers, *so* do they unto this day.

18 Now it came to pass in the third year of Hoshea son of

covenant and testimony unto Israel, the writer now turns to the new colonists of Samaria. They had heard, from the priest sent to them, an account of the Lord the God of Israel, and of what He had done for His people. For though the priest was probably one of the ministers before the calves, he would point, through them, to the God who brought Israel out of Egypt. This the writer appears to think should have moved the newcomers to regard Jehovah as far above any local deity.

41. *both their children*] R.V. **their children likewise.** A change which makes a semicolon necessary at the end of the previous clause.

It would seem from this statement that the mixed population in Samaria adhered to their several forms of idolatry through several generations, though we know that on the return of the captive Jews from Babylon B.C. 534, their descendants claimed to be allowed to take part in the restoration of the temple. The concluding words of the verse 'so do they unto this day' may be, and most probably are, taken from a document of earlier date than the compilation of the books of Kings. These carry the history down to about B.C. 560. The time between that date and the earlier days, when the priest sent from Babylon began to teach them something about Jehovah, may be taken in round numbers at a century and a half or nearly so. In that period the document was written from which our compiler drew, and when its author wrote the Samaritans were still idolaters. Such changes as were wrought among them, till they were all agreed to accept as authoritative the five books of Moses, would come about very gradually. Yet even imperfect teaching about Jehovah produced its effect. The priest who came to them would be one of those who had ministered at Bethel or Dan. Yet from the calves he would teach them of the God who had led Israel from Egypt to Canaan, and even from such lessons they would be brought to see that Jehovah was more than any mere local divinity, and to desire to join with the people whom they saw Him bringing once more out of the land of their captivity.

CHAP. XVIII. **1—8.** HEZEKIAH KING OF JUDAH. HE REIGNS WELL AND DESTROYS THE BRASEN SERPENT. SOME OF HIS SUCCESSES IN WAR. (2 Chron. xxix. 1—2.)

1. *in the third year of Hoshea*] In xvi. 2 we are told that Ahaz reigned sixteen years: in xvii. 1 that Hoshea began to reign in the twelfth year of Ahaz, and here that Hezekiah succeeded his father Ahaz in Hoshea's third year. We can see from this that the sixteen years of Ahaz must have been made up of fourteen complete years, and a broken year at the commencement, and another at the close of his reign. This makes Hezekiah to have been born when his

Elah king of Israel, *that* Hezekiah the son of Ahaz king of Judah *began* to reign. Twenty and five years old was he when 2
he *began* to reign; and he reigned twenty and nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also *was* Abi, the daughter of Zachariah. And he did *that* which *was* right in the sight 3
of the LORD, according to all that David his father did. He removed the high places, and brake the images, and 4
cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the brasen serpent

father was extremely young. He ascended the throne at twenty-five. Ahaz had done so at twenty (xvi. 2). Add to this a little more than fourteen years (say fifteen) for his reign. Thus his whole life must have been but thirty-five years; so that his son, according to this chronology, must have been born when Ahaz was ten years of age.

2. *His mother's name also* was *Abi*] R.V. **And his mother's name was Abi.** In Chronicles the name is given as Abijah.

3. *he did* that *which* was *right in the sight of the Lord*] The Chronicler (2 Chron. xxix. xxx. xxxi.) gives among the good deeds of Hezekiah some that are not noticed by the compiler of Kings. In the first year of his reign and in the first month, he opened the doors of the house of the Lord and repaired them. He gathered the priests and Levites together and made them purify themselves and cleanse the house of the Lord. Then the king commanded a solemn sacrifice to be made on the altar of the Lord, and made regulations concerning the musical services of the temple. After that in the second month he proclaimed a solemn passover to which he invited all who would come both of Judah and of Israel, and posts were sent out to spread the announcement of the approaching feast. Some in Israel mocked at this, but some out of the tribes of Asher and Manasseh and Zebulon came to passover in Jerusalem. The idolatrous altars in Jerusalem were all destroyed and cast into the brook Kidron. The feast was prolonged for a second seven days and there was great joy in Jerusalem. After this the altars in Judah and in Benjamin, as well as in some parts of the kingdom of Israel, were broken down. The king then made arrangements for the courses of the priests and Levites, and appointed the order of their work, and the tithes that should be paid for their support. Officers were also appointed to have the oversight of this tithe system, both of its collection and its distribution among the priests and Levites. All these reforms appear to have been made at the very outset of Hezekiah's reign. They embrace no doubt the matters mentioned in verse 4 below, but the Chronicler's detail gives a more lively picture of the activity in reformation, which marked the opening of the new reign.

4. *brake the images* [R.V. **pillars**] *and cut down the groves*] R.V. **the Asherah.** On the 'pillars' see note on iii. 2, and on the 'Asherah', which was probably the wooden image of a goddess so called, see on xiii. 6.

the brasen serpent] There can be no doubt that, after the cures

that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it: and he called it Nehushtan.
5 He trusted in the LORD God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor *any*
6 that were before him. For he clave to the LORD, *and* departed not from following him, but kept his command-
7 ments, which the LORD commanded Moses. And the LORD

wrought (Numb. xxi. 9) by looking at the serpent which Moses made, this object, the sacrament of so great a blessing, would be reverently kept, and though we have no mention of its preservation and bestowal, nor any notice of it till this passage, there is no reason to suppose that it would be allowed to become lost or to be broken in pieces. Some have thought that the object here spoken of was a serpent made after the fashion of that early one set up in the wilderness. But when the statement in the text is so plain, and the material in question so little perishable there can be no reason to suppose from the mere silence of Holy Writ about it, that the original serpent had disappeared.

for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it] The record does not tell us when this worship of the brasen serpent began. But in midst of the many objects set up to be adored in the degenerate days of some of the kings, the adoration of the brasen serpent would be counted among the most reputable. Having once commenced there was no chance of its cessation in times like those of the last king, Ahaz.

and he called it Nehushtan] It is perhaps better to take an indefinite word as nominative to the verb 'called': '*one* called it', i.e. 'it was called' as is given in the margin of R.V. The word *Nehushtan* meaning 'a piece of brass' or 'something made of brass' may either be taken as a term of contempt, in which case the people who used the name were those who with Hezekiah caused it to be destroyed; or it may be the name which had in process of time come to be applied by everybody to this brasen figure. The words for 'serpent' and for 'brass' are in Hebrew very much alike, and a word like 'Nehushtan' might very well come in that language to convey in the popular speech the whole idea of 'brasen serpent', and win its way to general acceptance.

5. *the Lord God* [R.V. **the God**] *of Israel*] The usual change.

after him was none like him...nor any [R.V. **among them**] *that were before him*] The comparison is with individual kings. The plural expression of the latter half of this sentence in A.V. is correct.

6. and *departed not*] R.V. **he departed not.** Thus italics are avoided, and the emphasis of the verse seems to be strengthened.

which the Lord commanded Moses] Another indication that the compiler of Kings, or it may be the earlier authority from which he drew, accepted the Law as given by God to Moses. See also below in verse 12.

was with him; *and* he prospered whithersoever he went forth: and he rebelled against the king of Assyria, and served him not. He smote the Philistines, *even* unto Gaza, 8
and the borders thereof, from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city.

And it came to pass in the fourth year of king Hezekiah, 9
which *was* the seventh year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel, *that* Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up against Samaria, and besieged it. And at the end of three years 10
they took it: *even* in the sixth year of Hezekiah, that *is* the

7. and *he prospered whithersoever he went forth*] By placing the last four words at the beginning of the sentence, the R.V. again gets rid of the italic *and*.

he rebelled against the king of Assyria] Ahaz had purchased Assyrian help against Rezin and Pekah [xvi. 7—9] and had become the vassal of Tiglath-pileser. No doubt the terms between the two nations were meant to continue in the reigns of the successors of Ahaz and Tiglath-pileser. The revolt of Hezekiah seems to have been made regardless of these terms. For when Sennacherib comes to attack him, he feels he must admit (verse 14) that he has offended, 'I have offended, return from me, that which thou puttest on me will I bear'.

8. *he smote the Philistines*, even *unto Gaza*] Gaza was the most southern of the five great towns of the Philistines, so that it is intimated that the whole land of Philistia was overrun by the king of Judah.

from the tower of the watchmen, &c.] See above on xvii. 9 note.

9—12. Israel finally carried captive by Shalmaneser. (Not in Chronicles.)

9. *Shalmaneser...came up against Samaria and besieged it*] Probably the negotiations with So king of Egypt had still gone forward (xvii. 4), and the tribute due from Israel to Assyria had continued to be unpaid.

and besieged it] Shalmaneser commenced the siege, but the city was not taken till the reign of his successor Sargon. (See Schrader *Cuneiform Inscriptions*, Engl. Trans. I. p. 266.)

10. *at the end of three years they took it*] The consonants of the word rendered 'they took it' might, if different vowel points were added to them, be translated 'he took it'. That the vowels for the plural form have been written by the Massoretes can only be the result of a long retained tradition. The history must have died out of their knowledge entirely, but the word had been read as 'they took it' from the earliest times, and in that form they recorded it when they added the vowels to make their reading clear to the eye. Notice has already been taken of the remarkable way in which the Biblical record, though containing no record that the commencement of the siege and its close were in different reigns, yet avoids here any mistake in the history by the use of the pronoun 'they'. See note on xvii. 6 above. The siege of

ninth year of Hoshea king of Israel, Samaria was taken.
11 And the king of Assyria did carry away Israel unto Assyria,
and put them in Halah and in Habor *by* the river of Gozan,
12 and in the cities of the Medes: because they obeyed not the
voice of the LORD their God, but transgressed his covenant,
and all that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded,
and would not hear *them*, nor do *them*.

Samaria lasted from B.C. 724 to B.C. 722 and the capture was among the earliest events of Sargon's reign.

11. *did carry away Israel*] R.V. transposes the last two words that the order may be the same as in xvii. 6 where this verse appears almost word for word. On the changes made there and here in R.V., and on the geographical position of the places mentioned, see notes there.

12. *his covenant*, and [R.V. even] *all that Moses...commanded*] Thus R.V. avoids the italics.

the servant of the Lord] This name is often given to Moses in the earlier books. See Deut. xxxiv. 5, where it is found in the notice of his death. It is specially frequent in the book of Joshua. Cf. Josh. i. 1, 13, 15; viii. 31, 33; xi. 12, &c. In Chronicles also the title is used of him, see 2 Chron. i. 3; xxiv. 6, but in those books he is also called 'servant of God' (1 Chron. vi. 49; 2 Chron. xxiv. 9), and this form is found in Neh. x. 29; Dan. ix. 11; Rev. xv. 3.

hear them [R.V, it] *nor do* them [R.V. it] The change is required by reason of the previous alteration in the verse.

At this point terminates the Biblical history of the ten tribes. The people were for the most part carried away, and settled in various places in Assyria, and they never came again to their own land, which continued to be occupied by the settlers introduced by Shalmaneser. Of those who were removed, the most probable fate was that they became mixed up with the people of the various districts in which they were settled, and so their nationality was lost. Some of their descendants we can hardly doubt, joined themselves to their brethren of Judah in the later days when the two tribes also were carried captive by the same power. These would return when the captivity was at an end, and so we find notices in the later history of persons who were members of one or other of the ten tribes. That the number of the tribes was kept in mind we can see from the dedication service after the captivity (Ezra vi. 17), where among the sacrifices offered are 'twelve he-goats according to the number of the tribes of Israel'. In greater or less proportion each tribe must have been thought to be represented at this service. In the Apocryphal books we have mention of the same service in nearly similar words (1 Esdr. vii. 8). Tobit (Tob. i. 1) was of the tribe of Naphtali. In the book of Judith (vi. 15) we read of Ozias the son of Micha of the tribe of Simeon, in St Luke (ii. 36) Anna the daughter of Phanuel is of the tribe of Asher, in Acts (xxvi. 7) the language of St Paul shews that members of the twelve tribes were believed to be existing among the Jews of Palestine and of the

Now in the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah did Senna- 13
cherib king of Assyria come up against all the fenced cities

Dispersion; to which twelve tribes St James (i. 1) also addresses his Epistle.

But on the strength of language such as is found in the 2nd book of Esdras (xiii. 39—50) where the writer speaks of the ten tribes as going forth into a country where mankind had never dwelt, and of their future restoration, various theories have from time to time been started about the discovery of the lost tribes. The words of Josephus (*Ant.* XI. 5, 2) have helped on such notions. He speaks of the Israelites, i.e. the ten tribes, as existing in his own day in countless myriads beyond the Euphrates. If this statement had been true we should most certainly have found some mention of the people in other writers, of which there is not the slightest trace. Isolated bodies of Jews have no doubt been discovered here and there in the east, but no such community as would answer to the notions, which prevailed early in the Christian era of a large host of Israelites existing in some remote country of the north-east. The latest development of this notion, viz., that the Anglo-Saxon race is identical with the ten tribes, is only the outcome of great ignorance both of history and language. But it does harm because the devout among unlearned persons often grasp at such an idea, and by their absurd clinging thereto bring ridicule upon the rest of their faith, and are also led away from a reasonable and earnest study of the word of God into fanciful interpretations whereby they strive to support their erroneous ideas.

13—16. SENNACHERIB, KING OF ASSYRIA, INVADES JUDAH. HEZEKIAH SUBMITS, AND PAYS A LARGE TRIBUTE. (2 Chron. xxxii. 1; Isaiah xxxvi. 1.)

13. *Sennacherib king of Assyria*] Sennacherib was the son of Sargon, but as it seems not the eldest, and only became heir to the throne in the year before his father's death. He is said to have begun his reign B.C. 705 and to have been murdered in 681. The operations against Hezekiah seem to have been only part of a larger campaign, which appears to have been directed against those states which were in alliance with Egypt. For the Assyrian troops had gone beyond Jerusalem, and were at Lachish when Hezekiah sent in his submission. According to the inscriptions Sennacherib had overrun Phœnicia and advanced along the coast to attack the cities of the Philistines. We can see from xix. 8, 9 that the Egyptian power was advancing from the south, and eventually caused more pressure to be put on Jerusalem by the Assyrians that they might reduce it if possible before aid arrived from Egypt. For we may be sure that Hezekiah in his attempt to shake himself free from Assyria had, like his neighbours, sought the friendship of the Egyptians.

all the fenced cities of Judah] These were subjugated first, that there might be no chance of help from them if it became necessary to assault the capital. With some cities of the Philistines already in

14 of Judah, and took them. And Hezekiah king of Judah
sent to the king of Assyria to Lachish, saying, I have
offended; return from me: *that* which thou puttest on me
will I bear. And the king of Assyria appointed unto
Hezekiah king of Judah three hundred talents of silver and
15 thirty talents of gold. And Hezekiah gave *him* all the
silver that was found *in* the house of the LORD, and in the
16 treasures of the king's house. At that time did Hezekiah
cut off *the gold from* the doors of the temple of the LORD,

his hands, it would be easy for Sennacherib to overrun Judæa and capture the less fortified places.

14. *to Lachish*] On the situation and previous history of Lachish, see on xiv. 19. It was very close to Askelon, which is mentioned in the inscriptions as one of the places against which Sennacherib's expedition was specially directed. It is stated (2 Chron. xxxii. 9) that at this time Sennacherib besieged Lachish with all his power. So that it must have been a stronghold of some importance and perhaps a place likely to be of advantage in checking the approach of forces from Egypt, which were sure to be invited by those whom the Assyrians were attacking.

I have offended] It seems most natural to gather from this that Hezekiah had begun his movement for rebellion without any provocation from Assyria. The compact between Ahaz and Tiglath-pileser he would no doubt find galling, but his confession of a fault shews that he had attempted to withdraw his homage merely because he thought himself strong enough to do so. 'What, do we mince that fact which holy Hezekiah himself censures?...The comfort of liberty may not be had with an unwarranted violence. Holiness cannot free us from infirmity. It was a weakness to do that act which must be soon undone, with much repentance and more loss' (Bp Hall).

three hundred talents of silver] On the value of the talent of silver and of gold, see on v. 5. The amount exacted on this occasion is not so great as that taken by Pul from Menahem, which was a thousand talents of silver. But in the previous reign Ahaz (xvi. 8) had paid large sums to Assyria, so that Judah must at this time have been drained of resources, and even the king of Assyria could not have what was not there.

15. *all the silver that was found* in *the house of the Lord*] The like emptying of the treasuries both of the temple and of the king had been made a very few years before (xvi. 8) by Ahaz to purchase the alliance of Tiglath-pileser against Pekah and Rezin.

16. *cut off* the gold from *the doors of the temple*] Plainly shewing that there was a great scarcity of gold at this time. Hezekiah was the last man to have stripped the temple doors if there had been any other way of raising what was demanded. He had been rejoiced at the purification and adornment of the temple, and must have been very hard driven ere he consented to undo the work which he had so

and *from* the pillars which Hezekiah king of Judah had overlaid, and gave it to the king of Assyria.

And the king of Assyria sent Tartan and Rabsaris and 17
Rab-shakeh from Lachish to king Hezekiah with a great

lately done. Josephus adds to the history (*Ant.* x. 1. 1) a link which may explain the events which follow in the next section. He says that Sennacherib had promised the ambassadors of Hezekiah to depart on the payment of the impost, but that when he had received the money he paid no regard to what he had promised, but sent his officers to attack Jerusalem. In this way the Biblical record of verse 17 may be joined on to the statements in verse 16. The Chronicler takes no notice of the payment of tribute to Sennacherib, and gives only an account of the siege of Jerusalem and its non-success. And this he does with much more brevity than the compiler of Kings or the parallel record in Isaiah.

17—25. THE ASSYRIAN ARMY SENT AGAINST JERUSALEM. RAB-SHAKEH'S ARGUMENTS FOR A SURRENDER OF THE CITY. (2 Chron. xxxii. 2—12; Isaiah xxxvi. 2—10.)

17. *the king of Assyria sent Tartan*] In the light of the record in Chronicles, which says nothing of the previous proceedings of Sennacherib, we must consider that there was but one expedition, and that first came Hezekiah's submission, which was unavailing, and then followed the advance upon Jerusalem. We can imagine many things which induced Sennacherib not to keep faith with Hezekiah, but most probably it was the movements of the Egyptians in the south. Finding that they were advancing he would resolve on attacking and reducing Jerusalem before they arrived, and would care nothing for former compacts. *Tartan*, as well as the other two names here given, is probably an official title. Tartan is found in Is. xx. 1, and the R.V. puts a note in the margin 'the title of the Assyrian commander in chief'. In that place it is the title of the officer sent by Sargon against Ashdod. As this title here stands first, we may suppose that he was the chief military officer, though Rab-shakeh was the spokesman. It would be more correct to say 'the Tartan'.

and Rabsaris] The word is Hebrew in form and signifies 'the chief of the eunuchs'. It may be some title which the Jews modified so as to make of it a Hebrew word. Clearly in this place it indicates some high official. It need not necessarily be a military person, but some one like a lord chamberlain, who came with the Tartan to add civil dignity to the military. Rab-saris is found in Jeremiah (xxxix. 3) among the titles of the princes of the king of Babylon.

and Rab-shakeh] This word also has a Hebrew form, and means 'the chief cup-bearer'. The title may have been preserved and attached to an office, when the duties from which it was originally given had ceased to be performed, and others had been imposed in their place. And the Hebrew writers may have represented in their own way the meaning of a title for which they had no proper equivalent.

host *against* Jerusalem. And they went up and came *to* Jerusalem. And when they were come up, they came and stood by the conduit of the upper pool, which *is* in the
18 highway of the fuller's field. And when they had called to the king, there came out to them Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, which *was* over the household, and Shebna the scribe,

with a great host] For Jerusalem was stronger than the other places in Judah which he had already captured, and news from Egypt-wards was perhaps such as to make haste urgent.

against *Jerusalem*] R.V. **unto Jerusalem.** The original has no preposition, but the accusative of direction.

they came and stood by the conduit] The Chronicler gives us details which shew that some time elapsed before the attack on Jerusalem was commenced. Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib was come and that he was purposed to fight against Jerusalem. He therefore took counsel with his princes and blocked up all the water courses and fountains, so that the Assyrians should have as little water supply as possible. He also strengthened the fortifications, provided new weapons, and organized his forces. Then he gathered the people and encouraged them, so that they 'rested themselves upon the words of Hezekiah'. All this had been done before the arrival of Rab-shakeh and his fellows.

the upper pool] This is probably what in 2 Chron. xxxii. 30 is called 'the upper watercourse of Gihon'. On 'Gihon' see note on 1 Kings i. 33. The locality is described, in the same words as here, in Isaiah vii. 3, so that it was a well-known spot. The pool was within the walls, but from it went a conduit to the fuller's field. The fuller's occupation was one which was carried on without the walls.

18. *And when they had called to the king*] i.e. Had made it known in some way to the warders that they had a message for the king.

Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, which was *over the household*] This is the man who is spoken of in such terms of praise by Isaiah (xxii. 20—25). There God, by His prophet, calls him 'my servant Eliakim' and declares that 'he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the house of Judah' and that 'the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder'. The security of all things in his time is used by the prophet to prefigure a period of great blessing and peace. The office he held was a very dignified one, the highest under the king. It was held by Ahishar in Solomon's days (1 Kings iv. 6) and by Azrikam in the days of Ahaz (2 Chron. xxviii. 7), and the Hebrew word there employed to describe it (*nagid*) is one used of great rulers and princes, and marks the high position of the holder.

and Shebna [R. V. **Shebnah**] *the scribe*] The orthography of the name is varied in this chapter. In verse 37 it is written Shebna, but here and in 26 'Shebnah'. The R.V. in each case follows the Hebrew. This Shebnah had originally held the office which was at this time Eliakim's (Is. xxii. 15—19) but had been put down because of his luxury and also because he was a favourer of the alliance with

and Joah the son of Asaph the recorder. And Rab-shakeh 19
said unto them, Speak ye now to Hezekiah, Thus saith the
great king, the king of Assyria, What confidence *is* this
where*in* thou trustest? Thou sayest, (but *they are but* vain 20
words,) *I have* counsel and strength for the war. Now on
whom dost thou trust, that thou rebellest against me? Now 21
behold, thou trustest upon the staff of this bruised reed,

Egypt. This latter policy was always opposed by the prophets, and it was perhaps by Isaiah's influence that Shebnah had been reduced to the lower post of royal secretary.

Joah the son of Asaph the recorder] Joah is only mentioned in this narrative and the parallel chapter in Isaiah. His office was that of 'chronicler', so that he was a necessary member of the deputation sent to confer with the Assyrian envoys. Thus a faithful statement would be put on record of all that took place.

19. *Speak ye now to Hezekiah*] Their message was first addressed to the king, but afterwards they turn (verse 29) to the people who had gathered to hear the parley. The briefer record of the Chronicler combines both parts of the conference and says the messengers were sent 'unto Hezekiah...and unto all Judah that were at Jerusalem'.

the great king] Hezekiah would know that his own father Ahaz had been one of Assyria's tributaries, and that many other petty kings around were in the same condition. Hence the term is calculated to warn him against resistance.

What confidence is *this where*in *thou trustest*] The question in Chronicles, being represented as at once addressed both to king and people, is put in the plural number 'Whereon do *ye* trust'?

20. *Thou sayest, (but* they are but *vain words)*] Some have taken the words in the parenthesis as the object of the verb, so that the sense would be 'Thou speakest only vain words (when thou talkest about) counsel and strength'. But it is better to leave them as a parenthesis, because of the succeeding question Thou speakest of counsel and strength, whence are they to come? The literal meaning of the expression rendered 'vain words', i.e. a word of the lips, which is nothing but so much breath, is very forcible and is preserved on the margin both of A. V. and R. V. Instead of the italics '*I have*' R. V. inserts **There is.**

21. *Thou trustest upon the staff of this bruised reed*] Rab-shakeh answers his own question. It may be that he also is correct in saying that Hezekiah had hopes of help from Egypt. But in this the king would find no support from the prophets of the time. The figure of a reed is perhaps used by Rab-shakeh because Egypt produced them in abundance. A bruised reed, one which will crack, and offer jagged points at the broken part is used as a figure by Ezekiel concerning Egypt (xxix. 6), and the words exactly illustrate what Rab-shakeh would convey. 'They (the Egyptians) have been a staff of reed to the house of Israel. When they took hold of thee by thy hand thou didst break, and rend

even upon Egypt, on which if a man lean, it will go into his hand, and pierce it: so *is* Pharaoh king of Egypt unto all
22 that trust on him. But if ye say unto me, We trust in the LORD our God: *is* not *that* he, whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah hath taken away, and hath said to Judah and Jerusalem, Ye shall worship before this altar in
23 Jerusalem? Now therefore, I pray thee, give pledges to my lord the king of Assyria, and I will deliver thee two thousand horses, if thou be able on thy part to set riders upon

all their shoulder: and when they leaned upon thee, thou brakest, and madest all their loins to be at a stand'. (Bp Hall.)

Pharaoh king of Egypt] Pharaoh is here used as the common title of the native kings of Egypt. Thus Rabshakeh disposes of external help.

22. *We trust in the Lord our God*] Probably Rab-shakeh knew something about the character of Egypt and her ability and likeliness to help. 'Rahab that sitteth still' (Is. xxx. 7 R. V.) was a name probably not undeserved. But now he enters on a matter which he does not understand. He had heard no doubt of the many altars and high places which Hezekiah had swept away in the beginning of his reign, and he might have been told by some, who murmured at their removal, and urged that Jehovah was really worshipped at them, that the king had put down many altars of the true God, and for a fancy of his own had ordered all his subjects to worship in Jerusalem. But he did not, probably could not, comprehend that the law of Jehovah had long before ordained that when His worship should be brought to its true form among His people, there should be only one temple for the whole land. Hence his argument is 'How can you expect Jehovah to help you, when you have been breaking down His shrines and limiting His worship to a single spot'?

23. *Now therefore, I pray thee, give pledges to my lord*] R. V. **my master**. The change conforms to verses 24 and 27 below. Having ridiculed any trust in Egypt, and expressed his opinion that Hezekiah could not expect help from Jehovah, after demolishing all the altars in the land, Rab-shakeh comes to his third argument. This is, 'you have no forces to resist us'. He puts this into the form of a taunt. The verb rendered 'give pledges', has in its simpler voice, the sense of 'mortgaging' or 'giving something in pledge'. In the present verse it appears to mean 'pledge yourself', 'put yourself under some penalty'. And so the taunt is equivalent to saying: 'You dare not undertake to find two thousand riders, if I offer you the horses for them. If you dare, then do it. The horses are ready; I challenge you to provide the men'.

I will deliver] R.V. **give**. The verb is the one usually rendered 'give', and the insult is made the greater by this proud way of expressing superiority.

them. How then wilt thou turn away the face of one cap- 24
tain of the least of my master's servants, and put thy trust
on Egypt for chariots and for horsemen? Am I now come 25
up without the LORD against this place to destroy it? The
LORD said to me, Go up against this land, and destroy it.
Then said Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, and Shebna, and 26
Joah, unto Rab-shakeh, Speak, I pray thee, to thy servants

24. *How then wilt thou, &c.*] Rab-shakeh impudently takes for granted that Hezekiah's only answer would be 'I have not the men'. So he proceeds with his insults, and points out what he deems the folly of resistance. 'We, three of the principal officers of our master, are come to treat with you. As your power is so feeble, you ought not to think of opposition, but to listen to the Assyrian proposals if they were brought even by some inferior person.' The word which in this verse is rendered 'captains' is that which is constantly used in Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther of the 'governors' of provinces belonging to the great king. Any one of these, Rab-shakeh intimates, would be a power by himself which Hezekiah ought not to despise, as he possesses no men, even if the horses were made a present to him, out of which to form a body of cavalry. When Assyria can be so liberal in offers of horses, and when even her smallest governors are so well equipped with troops, is it not folly to go to Egypt for chariots and horses? He knows, and intimates that the same kind of vassalage would be required by the king of Egypt, as the king of Assyria demands.

Some have taken the verb 'wilt thou turn away' as equivalent to 'wilt thou defeat and put to flight'. But this seems to suit very badly with the concluding clause of the sentence. 'To put trust in Egypt' is a good antithesis to the rejection of a proposal from the side of Assyria, but not to the defeat of the Assyrian troops.

25. *Am I now come up without the Lord*] Rab-shakeh goes one step further, and with a bold assertion claims Jehovah's support. Perhaps he thought his lie would receive some credence because he had already been able to reduce the towns all round Jerusalem. And if it did, one great stay of the king's courage would be broken down. 'How fearful a word was this. The rest were but vain cracks: this was a thunderbolt to strike dead the heart of Hezekiah. If Rab-shakeh could have been believed, Jerusalem could not but have flown open' (Bp Hall). Rab-shakeh would know and use the name of the God of Israel, without regarding Him otherwise than as a local deity, just as Asshur was of Assyria.

26—37. FURTHER INSOLENCE OF RAB-SHAKEH. HE ADDRESSES THE PEOPLE THAT STAND ON THE WALL. DESPAIR OF HEZEKIAH'S MINISTERS. (2 Chron. xxxii. 13—19; Isaiah xxxv. 11—22.)

26. *Speak, I pray thee...in the Syrian language*] The language intended is more properly named, as in the margin of R.V. 'Aramæan'

in the Syrian language; for we understand *it:* and talk not with us in the Jews' language in the ears of the people that
27 *are* on the wall. But Rab-shakeh said unto them, Hath my master sent me to thy master, and to thee, to speak these words? *hath he* not *sent me* to the men which sit on the wall, that *they* may eat their own dung, and drink their own piss
28 with you? Then Rab-shakeh stood and cried with a loud voice in the Jews' language, and spake, saying, Hear the
29 word of the great king, the king of Assyria: Thus saith the king, Let not Hezekiah deceive you: for he shall not be able to
30 deliver you out of his hand: neither let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD, saying, The LORD will surely deliver us, and this city shall not be delivered into the hand of the

This was the language of Mesopotamia and Babylon. It was of the same family as Hebrew, but yet not commonly understood by the people of Judæa. The court officials would of necessity have to speak it for the purposes of political intercourse. 'Syriac' is a later dialect of Aramæan. For 'talk not' R.V. has **speak not**. The original word is the same as in the previous clause. By their request Eliakim and his companions at once put themselves at Rabshakeh's mercy, and he shewed them none. 'Lewd men are the worse for admonitions. Rab-shakeh had not so strained his throat to corrupt the citizens of Jerusalem, had it not been for the humble obtestation of Eliakim. Now he rears up his voice and holds up his sides, and roars out his double blasphemies' (Bp Hall).

the people that are *on the wall*] There had gathered a crowd around Hezekiah's ministers to hear the issue of the conference, and these from their previous sufferings in the siege would be ready enough to put a favourable construction on Rab-shakeh's argument. The Chronicler (2 Chron. xxxii. 11) represents him as employing the powerful argument to starving men 'Doth not Hezekiah persuade you to give yourselves over to die by famine and by thirst'? This is the fearful extremity which is so coarsely alluded to in the words of the next verse. That such food had been used by persons reduced to extremity in a siege, see above chap. vi. 25 and the note there.

28. *with a loud voice*] To prove that it was to the people on the wall that his message was sent. If he could provoke them to desert their king, Jerusalem would soon be in the power of the Assyrians.

29. *out of his hand*] The natural expression would be 'out of *my* hand'. And so it is rendered in all the versions but the Chaldee. It is worth noting that in Isaiah these words are not expressed.

30. *this city shall not be delivered*] R.V. **given**. The Hebrew word is not the same as that rendered 'deliver' in this verse and the previous one. It is desirable that the difference should be made plain to the English reader.

king of Assyria. Hearken not to Hezekiah: for thus saith 31
the king of Assyria, Make *an agreement* with me *by* a present,
and come out to me, and *then* eat ye every man of his own
vine, and every one of his fig tree, and drink ye every one
the waters of his cistern: until I come and take you away to 32
a land like your own land, a land of corn and wine, a land
of bread and vineyards, a land of oil olive and of honey,
that ye may live, and not die: and hearken not unto Heze-
kiah, when he persuadeth you, saying, The LORD will deliver
us. Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered at all his 33
land out of the hand of the king of Assyria? Where *are* the 34
gods of Hamath, and of Arpad? where *are* the gods of

31. *Make* an agreement *with me* by *a present*] R.V. **make your peace with me.** The noun is that which is often rendered 'blessing' in the sense of a 'present' (see note on v. 15 above). And there is no example in the Bible exactly parallel to this. But the cognate verb is used of salutations (e.g. iv. 29), 'If any man *salute* thee', literally 'bless thee', 'wish thee peace'. Hence it is not difficult to see how such a noun would come to have the sense of 'peace', exactly like *shalôm*, which is the more usual word in such salutations.

and come out to me] i.e. Open your gates and submit yourselves instead of staying within to die of starvation.

and then [R.V. omits then] *eat ye every man* [R.V. **one**] *of his own vine*] Cf. above 1 Kings iv. 25 where the description applies to the most prosperous days of the reign of Solomon.

cistern] This was a pit or well dug for collecting water, not the sort of manufactured tank to which the name is now usually given.

32. *until I come ana take you*] Submission was to be followed, as was usual with Assyria, by deportation, but the people are promised a land as good as their own. For the similar description of the land of Canaan see Deut. viii. 7—9.

and not die] Again he refers, as to an argument likely to be most powerful, to the famine which was imminent if the siege continued.

33. *Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered at all*] R.V. **ever delivered.** So that it is clear that Rab-shakeh, in spite of his language in verse 25, counted Jehovah as but one among the many local deities which were supposed specially to belong to one city or one country.

34. *gods of Hamath, and of Arpad*] Of *Hamath*, see above on xvii. 24. *Arpad* is always spoken of in connexion with Hamath, but the site of the place has not been determined, nor any trace of the name found except in the Bible (2 Kings xix. 13; Jerem. xlix. 23; Is. x. 9; xxxvi. 19; xxxvii. 13). In the two last-named places A.V. writes the word *Arphad*, and the same spelling is found 2 Esdras ix. 26 as a various reading for Ardath. From the passage in Jeremiah above quoted it is manifest that like Hamath, it belonged to Damascus, for it is included in the prophecy concerning that city. The chief god of Damascus was Rimmon.

Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivah? have they delivered Samaria
35 out of mine hand? Who *are they* among all the gods of the
countries, that have delivered their country out of mine
hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem out of mine
36 hand? But the people held their peace, and answered him

the gods of Sepharvaim] See above, on xvii. 31.

Hena] The LXX. represents the name by Ἀνὰ. From the combination of the gods of Sepharvaim with those of the other two places here mentioned, we should gather that the worship in all three was the same. This gives support to the conjecture which identifies Hena with *Ana*, a city not far from Sepharvaim. Other opinions favour the identification of the place with *Anat*, an island in the Euphrates, near its union with the *Khabour*. This also would be not very remote from Sepharvaim.

and Ivah] R.V. **Ivvah**. This place is supposed to be the same with *Ava* (R.V. **Avvah**) in xvii. 24 above, where see note. If it be identified, as has been suggested, with *Ahava*, all the three places lie close together. 'Hena' and 'Ivah' are omitted from the parallel passage in Isaiah.

have they delivered Samaria] Among the gods of the countries, the gods of Samaria have been in Rab-shakeh's thoughts though he has not expressly spoken of them. But here, as if he had done so, he asks: Have they delivered Samaria?

35. *that the Lord should deliver Jerusalem*] Rab-shakeh should have had a better memory. In verse 25 he said he had the Lord's command to destroy Jerusalem; but here, forgetful, he speaks of the same Lord as one who might be expected to defend it.

Or does he only speak *ex concesso*, taking the ground of those whom he addresses? *They* thought the Lord would deliver. 'If you do think so', would then be his meaning, 'what reason have you for your belief'?

36. *the people held their peace*] Rab-shakeh had hoped to excite the people, at all events, to some expression of discontent, and perhaps had any movement of that kind been displayed, the 'great host' of verse 17 would at once have begun the attack, for treason within the city might have opened the gates. But the expectation is utterly disappointed, even the fear of starvation provokes no treachery.

Bp Hall observes here, 'I do not more wonder at Hezekiah's wisdom in commanding silence, than at the subjects' obedience in keeping it. This railer could not be more spited, than with no answer; and if he might be exasperated he could not be reformed. Besides, the rebounding of those multiplied blasphemies might leave some ill impressions in the multitude. This sulphurous flask, therefore, dies in his own smoke; only leaving a hateful stench behind it'.

The Chronicler, though his account is briefer, yet describes in more terrible terms the blasphemies of the Assyrian envoy. Not only does he mention his language to those who came to hear him, but he adds 'he wrote also letters to rail on the Lord, the God of Israel, and to speak against Him...and they spake against the God of Jerusalem, as

not a word: for the king's commandment was, saying, Answer him not. Then came Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, 37
which *was* over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph the recorder, to Hezekiah with *their* clothes rent, and told him the words of Rab-shakeh.

And it came to pass, when king Hezekiah heard *it*, that 19
he rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, and went *into* the house of the LORD. And he sent Eliakim, 2
which *was* over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests, covered with sackcloth, to Esai the prophet the son of Amoz. And they said unto him, 3

against the gods of the people of the earth which were the work of the hands of man'. (2 Chron. xxxii. 17, 19.) Perhaps he is alluding to the letter mentioned below (xix. 14).

37. *with* their *clothes rent*] See note on Chap. v. 7.

CH. XIX. 1—7. HEZEKIAH SENDS MESSENGERS TO ISAIAH. ISAIAH'S ANSWER IN THE NAME OF THE LORD. (Not in Chronicles. Isaiah xxxvii. 1—7.)

1. *Hezekiah...covered himself with sackcloth*] No doubt the words which his messengers reported were such as to tell upon the king, especially that saying of Rab-shakeh 'The Lord said unto me, Go up against this place and destroy it'. The king was struck with horror as much as his counsellors. But he feels that he has in his council one who has long been known as God's messenger to Judah. So while he himself falls to humiliation and prayer, going for that purpose into the house of the Lord, he sends his servants to enquire of the prophet what hope there is amid the terrible attack which may very soon be upon them.

2. *he sent...to Esai*] R.V. Isaiah. The historian has up to this time never mentioned the name of the great prophet. But we know from Isaiah's own writings that as early as the reign of Uzziah (Is. vi. 1) the Lord had revealed His majesty to the son of Amoz, and had sent him to bear witness unto Judah. The reigns of Jotham and Ahaz are past, and to the latter king Isaiah had brought the message of deliverance from Pekah and Rezin, which had been fully accomplished, so that Ephraim was now broken and was no more a people (Is. vii. 8). We may be sure that one so endowed with insight into the divine will had been taken at once into the councils of Hezekiah, and that no one's words had carried more weight. It may well be that Isaiah had advised the struggle for freedom which Hezekiah undertook, and certainly during the fourteen years (2 Kings xviii. 13) which had elapsed since Hezekiah came to the throne the God-fearing king had done much, may we not say most things, by the advice of the prophet. Hence when the days are darkest, it is to Isaiah he sends as the source of true light.

Thus saith Hezekiah, This day *is* a day of trouble, and of rebuke, and blasphemy: for the children are come to the
4 birth, and *there is* not strength to bring forth. It may be the LORD thy God will hear all the words of Rab-shakeh, whom the king of Assyria his master hath sent to reproach the living God; and will reprove the words which the LORD thy God hath heard: wherefore lift up *thy* prayer for the
5 remnant that are left. So the servants of king Hezekiah
6 came to Isaiah. And Isaiah said unto them, Thus shall ye say to your master, Thus saith the LORD, Be not afraid of the words which thou hast heard, *with* which the servants of

3. *This day* **is** *a day of trouble, and of rebuke, and of blasphemy*] R.V. **contumely.** The words refer to the condition of Hezekiah and his people. First they are in great anguish, kept in and surrounded by a threatening and mighty enemy, this is the trouble: then they are reminded of their offences and feel that for their wrong they are under chastisement and reproof: and lastly, that they are given over to the adversaries so that their enemies mock at their confidence with insolent derision. Hence without help from God, and with no hope from men, their conceptions of freedom and liberty were likely all to prove abortive, and come to no result. The figure which the king employs indicates that they were in the extremest danger, and had no power to save themselves.

4. *It may be*] The Hebrew word introduces expressions of uncertainty but yet of hope. Cf. Numb. xxiii. 3 where Balaam says to Balak, '*Peradventure* the Lord will come and meet me'; and Josh. xiv. 12 where Caleb entreats for the possession of Hebron, in hope to drive out the Anakim, '*If so be* the Lord will be with me, then I shall be able to drive them out'. Hezekiah is sending to the only source of hope.

and will reprove R.V. [**rebuke**] *the words*] The verb is cognate with the noun rendered 'rebuke' in the previous verse. The ground on which Hezekiah pleads that God should interpose is not that he and his people have deserved such mercy, but that in what they suffer God's name and honour are blasphemed.

wherefore lift up thy *prayer for the remnant that are* [R.V. **is**] *left*] The cities round about had been for the most part reduced by Sennacherib's army. The feeble remnant is Jerusalem and its people. For these Hezekiah entreats Isaiah to intercede. The king knew from the experience of his father's reign how Isaiah had been chosen by God as His messenger. His prayer therefore he thinks will be of much efficacy. As to send to a mighty king by one who has near access to him is the surest way of making a want known, and obtaining relief.

6. *Be not afraid of the words which* [R.V. **that**] *thou hast heard*, with *which* [R.V. **wherewith**] &c.] These slight changes make the rendering like that in Isaiah, where the Hebrew corresponds exactly.

the king of Assyria have blasphemed me. Behold, I will 7
send a blast upon him, and he shall hear a rumour, and
shall return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by
the sword in his own land.

So Rab-shakeh returned, and found the king of Assyria 8
warring against Libnah: for he had heard that he was

God's prophet sets down the threats and insults of Rab-shakeh as 'words' and no more. That there is a degree of contempt in the whole sentence is shewn in the words for 'servants' which is not the same as that so rendered in verse 6, but may be rendered 'young men' (the LXX has παιδάρια), not that Rab-shakeh and his comrades were young, but the words of Isaiah estimate their boasts and threatenings as 'young men's words'.

7. *Behold, I will send a blast upon him*] R.V. **put a spirit in him.** 'Blast' in this verse is often wrongly accepted as referring to the destroying angel of verse 35 below. The true sense is represented in R.V. God would give to Sennacherib and his soldiers such an inward motion or impulse that the news which should be brought to them should alarm them and drive them away. We know from Saul's history how an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him (1 Sam. xvi. 14). In another wise there should come a troubling spirit upon the Assyrians, which should make them ready to take alarm at anything. This is the sense of the LXX. δίδωμι ἐν αὐτῷ πνεῦμα. But the word for 'spirit' and for 'wind' being the same in both Hebrew and Greek some interpreters have thought that the allusion is to the blast, sound or noise which would bring the rumour alluded to in the next words. But this sense seems less likely than the former, and finds no illustration elsewhere.

and he shall hear a rumour] Probably refers to the report about the Ethiopian king, Tirhakah, spoken of presently, in verse 9 as on the march to meet Sennacherib. The answer of the prophet does not speak of the destruction of the host, an event which more than anything else hastened Sennacherib's departure.

and shall return to his own land] See below verse 36.

I will cause him to fall] Though the whole manner of God's intervention be not made known, enough is laid open to shew us that to the boastful Sennacherib God had already fixed his day. The two sons (verse 37) are the instruments, but they, though they know it not, are only working out God's design.

8—13. SENNACHERIB'S LETTER TO HEZEKIAH. (2 Chron. xxxii. 17; Isaiah xxxvii. 8—13.)

8. *So Rab-shakeh returned*] i.e. Southward, towards Lachish, but during his absence Sennacherib had undertaken to attack Libnah, and there Rab-shakeh found him.

Libnah] See above on viii. 22. Libnah was almost in a direct line eastward from Lachish.

departed from Lachish. And when he heard say of Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, Behold, he is come out to fight against thee: he sent messengers again unto Hezekiah, saying, Thus shall ye speak to Hezekiah king of Judah, saying, Let not thy God in whom thou trustest deceive thee, saying, Jerusalem shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria. Behold, thou hast heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands, by destroying them utterly: and shalt thou be delivered? Have the gods of the nations delivered them which my fathers have destroyed; *as* Gozan, and Haran, and Rezeph, and the children of Eden which

9. *And when he heard say of Tirhakah*] Tirhakah is called by Manetho, *Tarakos*. He was the third and last king of the xxvth dynasty, which was Ethiopian. The duration of his reign is not accurately known. The news of Tirhakah's advance caused Sennacherib to feel the importance of getting Jerusalem into his possession, seeing it was so much stronger than any position which he yet had. It had been a fortress of considerable importance in the time of the Jebusites (2 Sam. v. 6), and in the intervening period between David and Hezekiah its defences had been made much more complete.

he sent messengers again unto Hezekiah] This time they were the bearers of a letter (see below, verse 14) to the king. This may be the letter alluded to 2 Chron. xxxii. 17.

10. *Thus shall ye speak to Hezekiah king of Judah, saying*] These words are unrepresented in the LXX.

Let not thy God...deceive thee] This was the sort of railing on the God of Israel, and the speaking against Him on which the Chronicler dwells so strongly.

Jerusalem shall not be delivered] R.V. **given.** The change brings this passage into conformity with Isaiah. Also as 'deliver' is used in the two following verses in a different sense, it is well that the word should be varied.

11. *by destroying them utterly*] The verb implies 'dooming', 'devoting as if to a curse'. Hence the LXX. represents it by ἀναθεματίσαι.

12. as *Gozan*] The R.V. omits the italic 'as' both here and in the parallel place in Isaiah. On *Gozan* see above xvii. 6 note.

and Haran] The LXX. gives for this place Χαρράν, as in Gen. xxvii. 43, thus identifying it with the place where Abraham dwelt after leaving Ur of the Chaldees. The town of Haran [still called *Harran*] is in the midst of the district which lies under Mt. Masius between the Khabour and the Euphrates.

and Rezeph] This name is found in several places in the neighbourhood of the Euphrates, where from the situation of the other cities mentioned with it, this Rezeph most likely was situated. Two places, one on the west and one on the east of the Euphrates have been put forward

were in Thelasar? Where *is* the king of Hamath, and the king of Arpad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, *of* Hena, and Ivah? 13

And Hezekiah received the letter of the hand of the messengers, and read it: and Hezekiah went up *into* the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD. And Hezekiah prayed before the LORD, and said, O LORD God 14 15

as the city here mentioned but we have no means of deciding more than that the place was not far distant from the others named along with it.

the children of Eden which were *in Thelasar*] R.V. **Telassar.** This latter form is the orthography of A.V. in the parallel verse in Isaiah. Of the position of this *Eden* it is impossible to say more than that it was probably somewhere in the north west of Mesopotamia, whither Assyrian conquest had spread in the times just preceding Sennacherib, and to which he would intend now to call attention. The LXX. omits this name in the parallel place in Isaiah. Telassar must have been the chief seat of these children of Eden, the capture of which broke down the people. In Ezek. xxvii. 23, Eden is again joined with Haran, and with Asshur. Hence some confirmation may be drawn for placing the people in the upper Mesopotamian plain.

All the places above named are additional to those given by Rabshakeh in his recital of Assyrian victories (xvii. 34).

13. *Where is the king of Hamath*] On all the places named here, see above in the notes on xvii. 34.

14—19. HEZEKIAH SPREADS THE LETTER BEFORE THE LORD, AND PRAYS FOR DELIVERANCE. (2 Chron. xxxii. 20; Isaiah xxxvii. 14—20.)

14. *Hezekiah received the letter*] Though bringing a written document the messengers of Sennacherib may be supposed to have also enforced their message by words of their own.

went up into [R.V. **unto**] *the house of the Lord*] The change brings the words into exact likeness with the verse in Isaiah. It is not likely that the king entered the temple. He would go into no place which was set apart only for priests and Levites. It is more reasonable to suppose that standing at the porch he made his prayer towards the Holy of Holies to which he alludes.

spread it before the Lord] We are not to think of this act as intended by the king to exhibit the letter for the divine inspection. It was rather done that the object being present to his own sight, his prayer might be prompted thereby and rendered more fervent. The letter was no doubt in the Hebrew character, and the sight of its language would help his thoughts.

15. *And Hezekiah prayed before the Lord*] The Chronicler says 'Hezekiah the king, and the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz, prayed and cried to heaven'.

of Israel, which dwellest *between* the cherubims, thou *art* the God, *even* thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth;
16 thou hast made heaven and earth. LORD, bow down thine ear, and hear: open, LORD, thine eyes, and see: and hear the words of Sennacherib, which hath sent him to
17 reproach the living God. Of a truth, LORD, the kings of
18 Assyria have destroyed the nations and their lands, and have cast their gods into the fire: for they *were* no

O Lord God [R.V. **the God**] *of Israel, which dwellest* between *the cherubims*] R.V. **which sittest upon the cherubim.** On the cherubim and their position above the ark, as the place where the divine presence was manifested and dwelt, see note on 1 Kings vi. 23.

thou art *the God*, even *thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth*] Sennacherib's letter had spoken of 'the gods of the nations'. Hezekiah contrasts his own faith in Jehovah with the false opinions of the heathen whose lands Sennacherib had overrun, and hence shews at once that he hopes that the fate of himself and his people will also be a contrast to theirs. In the next clause also he shews that the maker of all things must be the disposer of them all.

16. *Lord, bow down thine ear, and hear*] R.V. **Incline thine ear, O Lord, and hear.** This is the translation in Isaiah of the same Hebrew. Both should be alike, and the form chosen by R.V. seems preferable as the words are addressed to God. The king can only speak in the figures which men would use to one another, but in this application of human attributes to the Almighty there need not be of necessity any misconception. There could have been none in Hezekiah's thoughts concerning the Maker of heaven and earth.

which hath sent him [R.V. **wherewith he hath sent**] *to reproach the living God*] There is in the orginal a suffix in the singular number attached to the verb, which refers to the 'words' before alluded to though they are mentioned as plural. The idea is however singular, and indicates the 'message'. So that literally the Hebrew would be translated 'which he hath sent it', and that is their way of saying, 'wherewith he hath sent'. The A.V. took the suffix which in the parallel place of Isaiah is not expressed to refer to Rab-shakeh and so translated 'which hath sent him'.

Hezekiah calls Jehovah 'the living God' as opposed to the idols of wood and stone spoken of in Sennacherib's letter.

17. *the kings of Assyria have destroyed* [R.V. **laid waste**] *the nations*] The change is in conformity with the rendering in Isaiah, where the Hebrew, however, says '*all* the countries and their land' (R.V.) The Hebrew word translated 'destroyed' in the next verse is different from this.

18. *have cast their gods into the fire*] A conquering heathen would shew his contempt for the nations which he overcame by destroying the objects of their worship, thus practically telling the vanquished that his gods were superior to theirs. Moreover such destruction would

gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone: therefore they have destroyed them. Now therefore, O LORD 19
our God, I beseech thee, save *thou* us out of his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou *art* the LORD God, *even* thou only.

Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, 20
Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, *That* which thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib king of Assyria I have heard. This *is* the word that the LORD hath spoken con- 21
cerning him;

The virgin the daughter of Zion hath despised thee, *and* laughed thee to scorn;

very often be a source of booty, for the images, of wood and stone underneath, were often richly overlaid with gold and silver.

19. *Now therefore, O Lord our God, I beseech thee, save* thou *us*] The R.V. puts 'I beseech thee' after 'save thou us' that being the order of the Hebrew sentence. There is no Hebrew in Isaiah for 'I beseech thee'.

that all the kingdoms of the earth may know] It is remarkable how the loftiest souls among the Jews felt that their nation was meant to be God's witness to the rest of the world. Such sentiments are found not seldom in the prophecies and psalms. Cf. also 1 Sam. xviii. 46 and the marginal references there. That case, which is David's conquest of Goliath, may be aptly compared with this. For all men would understand if Sennacherib now were conquered it was not by the power of Jerusalem only, but by the hand of Him who had put His name there, just as David had said 'The battle is the Lord's'.

20—37. THE ANSWER OF THE LORD THROUGH ISAIAH, AND THE MANNER OF ITS FULFILMENT. (2 Chron. xxxii. 21, 22; Isaiah xxxvii. 21—38.)

20. *The Lord God* [R.V. **the God**] *of Israel*] The LXX. represents here 'the Lord, the God of hosts, the God of Israel', a very suitable expression at such a crisis but not in the Hebrew either here or in Isaiah.

That *which* [R.V. **whereas**] *thou hast prayed to me*] This change is in conformity with Isaiah. But in the Hebrew there, the words 'I have heard' are not represented. In the verse before us the R.V. puts 'thee' in italics after them. 'I have heard *thee*'.

21. *The virgin the* [R.V. omits *the*] *daughter of Zion hath despised thee*] The first part of the prophetic word is addressed to Sennacherib. Jerusalem is called 'daughter of Sion' because her inhabitants may be counted poetically as the offspring of Sion. She is also called 'virgin' because hitherto, since David's time, when the chosen people first obtained complete possession of the place, it had never been

The daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee.
22 Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed?
And against whom hast thou exalted *thy* voice,
And lift up thine eyes on high?
Even against the Holy One of Israel.
23 By thy messengers thou hast reproached the Lord, and hast said,
With the multitude of my chariots I am come up
To the height of the mountains, *to* the sides of Lebanon,

conquered. And by opening the prophecy with this word it seems to be foretold that it shall still be saved from conquest. Some have preferred to take the three words as all in apposition, rendering 'The virgin-daughter Sion', with much the same sense. In the original the first two words are both in the construct form, but instances are found of such forms standing as if only in apposition.

The daughter of Jerusalem] i.e. The people dwelling in the city.

hath shaken her head at thee] This was a gesture of scorn. Cf. Job xvi. 4, 'I could heap up words against you and *shake mine head* at you'. See also Ps xxii. 7; xliv. 15; cix. 25 and other parallel passages.

22. *and lift* [R.V. **lifted**] *up thine eyes on high*] The name by which Jehovah is often called is 'the Most High.' To utter reproaches and blasphemies against Him betrays a great uplifting of the eyes, a terrible excess of arrogancy.

the Holy One of Israel] This title of God, which occurs very frequently in Isaiah, signifies not only that God Himself is holy and specially gracious unto Israel, but that He makes the people holy also, separate from the rest of the world and sanctified by and for Himself. It expresses both the praise of God, and the privilege of His people.

23. *By thy messengers*] Rab-shakeh and his companions.

With the multitude of my chariots] This is the translation of the marginal reading (*Keri*) which stands as *Kethib* in the corresponding verse of Isaiah. Another reading is represented on the margin of the R.V. thus 'with the driving of my chariots'. This stands in the Hebrew text in Kings, and by some is preferred as being more unusual and therefore perhaps better suited to a poetical passage like the present. But the form in Isaiah has the support of all the versions and so had better be adopted here.

to *the sides* [R.V. **innermost parts**] *of Lebanon*] The word which A.V. translates 'sides' is very frequently applied to the interior, as of a house (Amos vi. 10), or a ship (Jon. i. 5), or a cave (1 Sam. xxiv. 4), or a grave (Is. xiv. 15). And so here it indicates the interior recesses of Lebanon, whither as conqueror Sennacherib expects to penetrate. The Lebanon was one of the choicest parts of the Holy Land, and its beauty is extolled in several passages of Solomon's song (see note on 1 Kings ix. 16).

And will cut down the tall cedar trees thereof, *and* the choice fir trees thereof:
And I will enter *into* the lodgings of his borders, *and into* the forest of his Carmel.
I have digged and drunk strange waters, 24
And with the sole of my feet have I dried up all the rivers of besieged *places*.

and will [R.V. **I will**] *cut down the tall cedar trees* [R.V. **cedars**] *thereof*] Both the changes are to the form in Isaiah. The beauty of the Lebanon was in its glorious trees. The figure chosen therefore expresses the devastation which the Assyrian purposed to bring on the grandest features of the country.

the lodgings of his borders] R.V. **his farthest lodging-places.** The words express the intention of the Assyrian to leave no place in the whole land of Judah unravaged, however remote it might be. There is a various reading in Isaiah, which is rendered 'the height of his border'. The LXX. does not represent this clause.

and into *the forest of his Carmel*] R.V. **the forest of his fruitful field.** R.V. also omits the italics. Carmel though often used as a proper name to designate that beautiful and fertile promontory which stretches out to the Mediterranean on the border of the tribe of Asher, yet as a common noun signifies a fruitful garden-like field. Thus Jer. ii. 7, 'I brought you into a plentiful country' (*lit.* a country of garden-land, Heb. *Carmel*). So here the phrase describes some park-like grounds with all the beauty of fine gardens. 'His wood which is cultivated like a garden'.

24. *I have digged and drunk strange waters*] Probably there is some allusion in this boast which is put into the mouth of Sennacherib to the attempts made by Hezekiah (2 Chron. xxxii. 3, 4) to deprive the Assyrians of a supply of water. Sennacherib means to say: 'Do what you may I am able by digging wells wherever I go to get water for my host, even where none had been found before'. This is most likely the sense of 'strange', which word does not appear in the corresponding verse of Isaiah.

And with the sole of my feet have I dried] [R.V. **will I dry**] *up all the rivers of besieged* places] R.V. **of Egypt.** This is a boast of the opposite nature. In Judæa the trouble might be that there was too little water. In Egypt there would be too much. But as in the former case the Assyrian could surmount all difficulties, so he had but to march into Egypt, and at his approach the Nile should be dried up and make a way for his troops to pass. The change of tense in the verb is necessary from the Hebrew, and the language is the proud king's way of saying 'As soon as I have reduced Jerusalem, I will pass on to Egypt and win that land too'.

The word translated 'rivers' is the Heb. 'Yeor' and is a proper name of the Nile. See R.V. Gen. xli. 1 margin. It is translated 'Nile' in R.V. of Is. xix. 7, three times over. Also the word rendered 'besieged

25 Hast thou not heard long ago *how* I have done it,
And of ancient times that I have formed it?
Now have I brought it to pass, that thou shouldest be to lay waste
Fenced cities *into* ruinous heaps.
26 Therefore their inhabitants *were* of small power,
They were dismayed and confounded;
They were *as* the grass of the field, and *as* the green herb,
As the grass on the house tops, and *as* corn blasted before it be grown up.
27 But I know thy abode, and thy going out, and thy coming in,

places' is the Hebrew 'Mazor' another form for 'Mizraim' the common word for 'Egypt', 'Mazor' is translated 'Egypt' in R.V. both here and in Is. xix. 6, and Micah vii. 12.

25. This verse and the three following contain Jehovah's response to Sennacherib. The boaster is told that in all he has done he has been but God's instrument, and that the events in which he has played that part had been ordained by the divine counsels long before.

Hast thou not heard long ago how *I have done it*] The R.V. puts 'long ago' at the end of this clause. The fame of God's protection and leading of Israel might be expected to have penetrated to other nations. From their history the heathen might have learnt that the people of the world are under the rule of the Lord, and that their destinies are ordered by Him.

And *of ancient times that I have formed it*] R.V. **and formed it of ancient times.** The LXX. represents the two first clauses of this verse merely by ἔπλασα αὐτήν, συνήγαγον αὐτήν.

Now have I brought it to pass] It was ordained long ago, and now I have permitted it to become a fact. With the whole of these four verses may be compared the Lord's address to the Assyrian (Is. x. 9—19). There that nation is described as the 'rod of God's anger'. It is God that sends him and gives him his charge to take spoil and prey. But hereafter the Lord will punish him also, and the glory of his high looks. For another rendering of this sentence see margin of A.V.

26. *Therefore*] i.e. Not, as thou thinkest, because of thy might, but because I sent thee; for this reason it is that the people against whom thou camest were dismayed.

of small power] Literally, as in the margin 'short of hand'. Cf. the question of Moses (Num. xi. 23) 'Is the Lord's hand waxen short?' See also Is. l. 2; lix. 1.

They were as *the grass of the field*] All these figures of frailty are found in other places of Scripture. See Ps. xxvii. 2; xc. v; cii. 4, 11; Is. xl. 7. The grass upon the housetops, Ps. cxxix. 6.

27. *But I know thy abode*] R.V. **sitting down.** The verse expresses to the full, but with wonderful conciseness, how God has observed and

And thy rage against me.
Because thy rage against me and thy tumult is come up 28
into mine ears,
Therefore I will put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle
in thy lips,
And I will turn thee back by the way by which thou
camest.
And this *shall be* a sign unto thee, 29
Ye shall eat *this* year such things as grow of themselves,
And in the second year that which springeth of the same;
And in the third year sow ye, and reap,
And plant vineyards, and eat the fruits thereof.

is observing every action of Sennacherib. His dwelling, his movements to and fro, and the spirit which actuates them are all open before God's eyes, and He identifies Himself so completely with Hezekiah and Jerusalem as to call the rage of the Assyrian against them rage against Himself.

28. *is come up into mine ears*] So the cry of Sodom is said (Gen. xviii. 21) to *come up* unto God, and grieve Him. See also Jas. v. 4 where the cries of the oppressed labourers are said to be 'entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth'. The R.V. renders the first part of the verse **Because of thy raging against me and for that thine arrogance is come up**, &c.

I will put my hook in thy nose] The Assyrian is but as a wild beast let forth and permitted to do harm, but he is to be caught and reduced to subjection again, now that the time has come to put an end to his work.

by the way by which thou camest] Answering the boast that Sennacherib would go on till he had conquered Egypt.

29. *And this* shall be *a* [R.V. **the**] *sign unto thee*] The next portion of the oracle is addressed to Hezekiah. On the giving of a sign to mark the certainty of a prophecy, cf. Is. vii. 11—14.

Ye shall eat this *year such things as grow of themselves*] R.V. **that which groweth of itself.** The meaning of the sign appears to be this. Sennacherib was to be driven away from Jerusalem, yet though the land had been overrun by the enemy, and the people of Jerusalem had been shut up within the walls, they should find enough produce from what had been shed on the ground in the previous harvest time to serve them for the first year. In the next year they should be supplied in the same way, so that they could rest from the labours of the field, and both they and their lands enjoy a sabbatical year. Then in the third year they should commence undisturbedly their agricultural work, and enjoy their crops in peace. So that the sign looks far beyond the immediate deliverance (as also it does in Is. vii. 14 just quoted) and proclaims to Jerusalem a prolonged period of peace and security.

30 And the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah
Shall *yet* again take root downward, and bear fruit upward.
31 For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant,
And they that escape out of mount Zion:
The zeal of the LORD *of hosts* shall do this.
32 Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning the king of Assyria,
He shall not come into this city,
Nor shoot an arrow there,
Nor come before it *with* shield,
Nor cast a bank against it.
33 By the way that he came, *by the same* shall he return,
And shall not come into this city, saith the LORD.
34 For I will defend this city, to save it,
For mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake.

30. *The remnant...shall* yet *again take root*] Just as in the case of their crops, so shall it be with the people. God shall preserve a remnant, as He was doing in the shed grain of the harvest, and these shall once more grow up, in spite of their present low estate.

31. *And they that escape out of mount Zion*] R.V. **And out of mount Zion they that shall escape.** The change of order, as well as the change of tense, makes the sense more clear, and improves the parallelism.

The zeal of the Lord of hosts *shall do* [R.V. **perform**] *this*] In the Massoretic text there is a space left without consonants for the words in italics, and the vowel-points only are written there. The complete text exists in Isaiah, and ought to be here, but because in the early authoritative copies it did not occur, it has been continually left out. The R.V., which translates the *Kethib*, omits the italics.

32. *Therefore*] The LXX. makes the same error here with regard to the word 'therefore' as was noticed above on i. 3, and renders the Hebrew by οὐχ οὑτῶς. See former note.

He shall not come into [R.V. **unto**] *this city*] The R.V. renders the preposition correctly, and makes the same change in the next verse. We have no mention of Sennacherib's personal approach nearer than Libnah. (See above verse 8.)

Nor [R.V. **neither shall he**] *come*] The change relieves the verse from the monotony of several clauses commencing in exactly the same way.

nor cast a bank [R.V. **mount**] *against it*] 'Mount' is the correct term for an embankment thrown up for the purposes of a siege, and occurs in the A.V. of Jer. vi. 6; xxxii. 24; xxxiii. 4; Ezek. iv. 2; xxi. 22.

33. *By the way that he came*] Cf. above verse 28, and the fulfilment in verse 36.

34. *for mine own sake*] God's mercy and love to Israel were mani-

And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the LORD went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they *were* all dead corpses. So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh. And it came to pass, as he was worshipping *in* the house of Nisroch his god, that

35 36 37

fested that in them He might have witness to all the world. Hence the Psalmist often celebrates these qualities, and adds that they were shewn by Jehovah 'for His name's sake'. Cf. Ps. cvi. 8, 'He saved them for *His name's sake*, that He might make His mighty power to be known'. So God speaks (Is. xliii. 25) by the prophet: 'I am He that blotteth out thy transgressions *for mine own sake*'. See also Is. xlviii. 11.

35. *And it came to pass that night*] For this the record in Isaiah has only 'Then'. It would appear from the history that the destruction of his army took place before Sennacherib himself could have reached Jerusalem.

the angel of the Lord went out] R.V. **went forth**. The R.V. assimilates to Isaiah. In 2 Chron. xxxii. 21 the record is, 'The Lord sent an angel which cut off all the mighty men of valour, and the leaders and captains in the camp of the king of Assyria. So he returned with shame of face to his own land'.

and when they [R.V. **men**] *arose early*] The number of the slain (185,000) was exceeding great, and the Chronicler's statement makes the loss more terrible by saying that among those destroyed were all the leaders of the host.

36. *and dwelt at Nineveh*] Apparently, and very naturally, deterred from any of his grander schemes by the terrible calamity which had befallen him, Sennacherib went to his own capital. How long a time elapsed between this overthrow around Jerusalem and the death of the king, spoken of in the next verse, we have not sufficient data to decide. The canon of Ptolemy fixes the accession of Sennacherib in B.C. 702, his death in B.C. 680. These dates cannot be made to harmonize with the Scripture chronology.

37. in *the house of Nisroch*] The LXX. gives the name as Μεσεράχ. Of Nisroch we have no information except this passage, and it is uncertain whether the name be rightly represented in the Hebrew. Some have connected the word with the Hebrew *nesher*=an eagle, and because on the Assyrian monuments one most conspicuous figure is an eagle-headed man have thought that the name given to the god by the Hebrews refers to this representation. Probably the name is incorrect either because the Jews did not learn it correctly, or connected it with a false etymology. Josephus (*Ant.* x. 1, 5) says Sennacherib was murdered 'in his own temple Arasce' (ἐν τῷ ἰδίῳ ναῷ Ἀράσκῃ), which looks as if he had had some different name before him.

Adrammelech and Sharezer *his sons* smote him with the sword: and they escaped *into* the land of Armenia. And Esarhaddon his son reigned in his stead.

20 In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And the

Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons] Just as in verse 31 the Massoretic text had an omission of consonants and gave only the vowels of the word, so it is done with 'his sons' here. The consonants as well as vowels are written in the parallel place in Isaiah. The Chronicler (2 Chron. xxxii. 21) says 'they that came forth of his own bowels slew him with the sword'.

into *the land of Armenia*] R.V. **Ararat.** The change is in accordance with the Hebrew text. But the interpretation of Ararat as Armenia is found in the Vulgate of Gen. viii. 4, where 'upon the mountains of Ararat' is represented by *super montes Armeniæ*. Then in the verse of Isaiah parallel to this of 2 Kings, the LXX. translates by *εἰς* 'Αρμενίαν, and the Vulgate by *in terram Armeniorum*. That *Ararat*, though unknown to the Greeks and Romans, was the name of a part of Armenia is made evident by the name *Araratia* being given by Moses of Khorene to the central province of that country (*Hist. Armen.* Whiston, p. 361). In Tobit i. 21 where we have a notice of this king Sennacherib and his death, the name of the land of refuge is given as *Ararath*.

Esarhaddon] According to the Assyrian canon this king came to the throne in B.C. 681, and reigned till 668. In consequence of disaffection in Babylonia, he united it to the Assyrian kingdom and was the first (and only) Assyrian who had two capital cities. For he resided now in Nineveh and now in Babylon. On his dwelling at Babylon, cf. 2 Chron. xxxiii. 11. Esarhaddon was famous for the number and grandeur of his buildings, having erected in Mesopotamia and Assyria no fewer than thirty temples. His palace at Nimrûd has been discovered and excavated in recent times.

CH. XX. 1—11. SICKNESS OF KING HEZEKIAH. HIS LIFE IS PROLONGED IN ANSWER TO HIS PRAYER. THE SIGN GIVEN BY GOD THAT THIS SHOULD BE SO. (2 Chron. xxxii. 24; Isaiah xxxviii. 1—22.)

1. *In those days was Hezekiah sick*] Scripture writers are not precise in specifying times, and 'in those days' may mean no more than 'about that time' either before or after the defeat of the Assyrians. But there are one or two marks which may help us to come to a conclusion. In verse 6 the promise is made 'I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria'. But these words seem to relate rather to a further continued preservation than to the overthrow which drove Sennacherib away. Though the Assyrians were gone, it was not unlikely that they would return. It is to deliverance from all such future attacks that God's promise is best referred. For the visit of the ambassadors of the king of Babylon was 'at that time'

prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz came to him, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live. Then he turned his face to 2
the wall, and prayed unto the LORD, saying, I beseech thee, 3
O LORD, remember now how I have walked before thee in

(verse 12), clearly when Hezekiah had recovered, and when time enough had elapsed for the news about the sickness and the recovery to have reached Babylon. But the embassy was not merely for the purposes of congratulation, but to secure Hezekiah's alliance with Babylon against Assyria. The time would seem to the Babylonians most opportune for shaking off the Assyrian yoke, and the help of that power in attacking which the Assyrians had suffered so much loss, would appear the very best help that could be sought. Hence Berodach-baladan availed himself of the excuse of congratulating Hezekiah on his recovery to send an embassy to sound the king of Judah on the subject of an alliance. Hezekiah's answer was given by the exhibition of his supplies and stores of armour. Connecting the events together thus, we come to the conclusion that Hezekiah's sickness occurred soon after the Assyrian overthrow, and that thus the notes of time which fix (xviii. 13) Sennacherib's invasion in the *fourteenth* year of Hezekiah's reign, and promise the king *fifteen* years more of life are substantially exact, and fill up together the *twenty-nine* years assigned to Hezekiah's reign in xviii. 2.

And the prophet Isaiah [R.V. **Isaiah the prophet**] *the son of Amoz*] The change of order conforms to Isaiah xxxviii. 1.

Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live] One can hardly read these words without the conviction that the conduct of Hezekiah, after his deliverance from the Assyrian siege, had not been such as to find favour with God. A message of this kind would not be sent from God without good cause. Either there had been a lack of thankfulness, or the king was too much elated with the glory of so miraculous a deliverance. That Hezekiah could think of his own greatness and forget to point to God as its author is seen as we read of the display he made before the Babylonian embassy, which is recorded in this chapter.

2. *Then he turned his face to the wall*] He was in deep sorrow, and would pray without being observed. Ahab did the like, but it was in childish petulance (1 Kings xxi. 4). If Manasseh was the eldest son of Hezekiah, the king was at this time childless, for Manasseh was but twelve years old at his father's death. Hence not only his own life, but the succession of the house of David appeared likely to come to an end.

3. *I beseech thee, O Lord, remember now*] R.V. **Remember now, O Lord, I beseech thee.** The R.V. adopts the order of the words in Isaiah.

It was only at a moment of great elation and prosperity that Hezekiah forgat God. The testimony which he himself bears to his own character

truth and with a perfect heart, and have done *that* which *is*
4 good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore. And it came
to pass, afore Isaiah was gone out *into* the middle court,
5 that the word of the LORD came to him, saying, Turn again,
and tell Hezekiah the captain of my people, Thus saith the
LORD, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer,
I have seen thy tears: behold, I will heal thee: on the third
6 day thou shalt go up *unto* the house of the LORD. And I

appears to be generally true. He must have lived as a God-fearing son under an idolatrous father. When he came to the throne, while he had the work of purifying God's worship in hand, and the Philistines were not driven out of Judah, he did all things well. But after some prosperous years he had himself to own to Sennacherib 'I have offended'. During the war with Assyria he set a noble example. When the pressure was removed he gave way for a short time to pride and a boastful spirit. Moreover his care for his son's training, if we may judge by Manasseh's life when he became king, can hardly have been so zealous as we might expect from a father whose youth had been passed amid the difficulties of an idolatrous court. Altogether Hezekiah is one of those characters which shine brightest in adversity.

4. into *the middle court*] R.V. **middle part of the city.** The variation is due to a difference of reading, the R.V. translating, as is nearly always the case, the *Kethib*. The LXX. and most of the versions render the *Keri*, which the A.V. follows. The *Kethib* has העיר, the *Keri* substitutes חצר, which latter is the word for the 'court' of the palace in the description of Solomon's buildings (1 Kings vii. 8). But the city of Jerusalem was built on two hills, the western of which was more than a hundred feet higher than the eastern. The expression in the text would apply exactly to the portion lying between these two, and there seems to be no reason for accepting the *Keri*. It probably has sprung from a desire to represent God as hearing prayer so readily that a favourable answer was given before the prophet was beyond the precincts of the palace.

A description of the city will be found in Josephus, *B. J.* v. 4, 1, *seqq.* where the three parts of Jerusalem are noticed, the upper city (ἡ ἄνω πόλις) being Zion, the lower (ἡ κάτω πόλις) Akra. Isaiah had, according to the *Kethib*, gone into the portion between these two.

5. *tell* [R.V. **say to**] *Hezekiah the captain* [R.V. **prince**] *of my people*] The first of these changes is in conformity with Isaiah. The latter clause 'the captain &c.' is not in the parallel place in Isaiah, where, in this portion of the narrative, the whole record is much briefer.

The name 'prince' (Heb. *nagid*) is that which was applied by Jehovah Himself to the first elected king of Israel (1 Sam. ix. 16), Saul.

behold, I will heal thee: on the third day thou shalt go up unto *the house of the Lord*] These words are not found in Isaiah. But there

will add unto thy days fifteen years; and I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake. And Isaiah said, Take a lump of figs. And 7 they took and laid *it* on the boil, and he recovered. And 8 Hezekiah said unto Isaiah, What *shall be* the sign that the LORD will hear me, and *that* I shall go up *into* the house of

is given there the thanksgiving of Hezekiah which expresses the feelings with which the king would go up to the temple to acknowledge the goodness which had spared his life. It is called 'the writing of Hezekiah when he had been sick and was recovered of his sickness' (Is. xxxviii. 9), and is a sort of psalm of thanksgiving.

Though the promise of God 'thou shalt go up unto the house of the Lord' is omitted in Isaiah we yet see from the concluding words of Is. xxxviii. that the thought of it was in the writer's mind, for he tells us 'Hezekiah had said, What is the sign that I shall go up to the house of the Lord?'

6. *fifteen years*] See above on verse 1.

I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria] Some stress has been laid on these words as though they necessarily implied that Jerusalem was still besieged. The preposition rendered 'out of' is literally 'from', and if that be borne in mind there is no reason why the words should not refer to the continued protection which Hezekiah and his city enjoyed afterwards when Sennacherib had been driven away.

for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake] These words, which occur before in xix. 34, are not found in Isaiah xxxviii.

7. *Take a lump* [R.V. **cake**] *of figs*] Except here and in Isaiah xxxviii. 'cake' is the constant rendering of A.V. for this word. See 1 Sam. xxv. 18; xxx. 12; 1 Chron. xii. 40. The figs were closely pressed together for better keeping when they were dried, just as we find is done at the present time.

The virtue of figs made into a plaster has long been celebrated. Gerarde in his Herball (p. 1328) says, 'Figs stamped and made into the form of a plaister...soften and ripen impostumes...all hot and angry swellings, and tumours behind the eares'. The *boil* from which Hezekiah was suffering was clearly something of this character, and confined to one spot, so that it could be treated by a poultice. It was therefore most likely some sort of carbuncle, which in certain parts of the body, as the back of the neck, can prove fatal. The conjectures some of which make the disease to be *pleurisy*, others the *plague*, contracted from the Assyrians, others, *elephantiasis* or *leprosy*, are not so probable, as none of them appear likely to have been treated by a plaster.

8. *What* shall be *the sign*] The king would have some token at once that the promise made to him should come to pass, and though the time was but very brief to wait, yet his request is granted. In Is. vii. 11 there was a sign *offered* by God to Hezekiah's father.

9 the LORD the third day? And Isaiah said, This sign shalt
thou have of the LORD, that the LORD will do the thing
that he hath spoken: shall the shadow go forward ten
10 degrees, or go back ten degrees? And Hezekiah answered,
It is a light thing for the shadow to go down ten degrees:
11 nay, but let the shadow return backward ten degrees. And
Isaiah the prophet cried unto the LORD: and he brought
the shadow ten degrees backward, by which it had gone
down in the dial of Ahaz.

9. *shall the shadow go forward ten degrees* [R.V. **steps**], *or go back ten degrees*] R.V. **steps**. In the Hebrew there is no sign of interrogation in the first clause. But instances are not rare in which the interrogative sign is left out (cf. 1 Sam. xvi. 4; 2 Sam. xviii. 29). A greater difficulty is in the tense of the first verb. The clause, if it stood alone, would be translated, 'The shadow hath gone forward ten steps, (what) if it shall go back ten steps? But Hezekiah's answer implies that an alternative question was asked. Thus both A.V. and R.V. have translated it, but how the grammar is to be made to yield a double question is not easy to see. For if the omitted interrogation be supplied, we have still only, 'Hath the shadow gone forward ten steps?'

10. *It is a light thing for the shadow to go down* [R.V. **decline**] *ten degrees*] R.V. **steps**. The verb is not the same as that translated 'to go down' in verse 11. The king's meaning is that it appears more natural and therefore easier, for the shadow to make a sudden advance in the direction in which it has been already going, than to turn in the contrary way.

let the shadow return backward ten degrees] R.V. **steps**. Thus reversing the order of nature.

11. *And Isaiah the prophet cried unto the Lord*] This verse and the two preceding are much compressed in the narrative of Isaiah, and nothing is said of Isaiah's supplication, nor of the alternatives offered to the king. The whole is put into the form of a direct message from God, 'Behold I will bring again' &c.

he brought the shadow ten degrees [R.V. **steps**] *backward*] The statement in Isaiah is not made concerning the shadow, but the sun. 'So the sun returned ten degrees' (R.V. **steps**).

in [R.V. **on**] *the dial of Ahaz*] As will be seen from the margin of R.V., the word here rendered 'dial' is the same which in the previous verses the Revisers have translated 'steps'. Also wherever the word is used elsewhere, and it is not of rare occurrence, it always refers to steps or stairs. It seems therefore best to consider that the contrivance by which the time of day was marked in this case was something which could be called a 'staircase' or 'steps'. We must think too of the sign as given to Hezekiah while he lay upon what had been till a short space before, the bed of sickness and expected death. We must therefore conclude that the contrivance, whatever it was, must have been one

which the king could see from his chamber. Probably it would be in the court of the palace, and there it might take the form of a staircase-like erection, with a gnomon or projecting shaft, so contrived that the shadow thrown by it should fall along the steps and grow shorter or longer as the sun rose or fell in the heavens. Or it might be a staircase proper, erected on one side of the court, and a staff or pole might be so fixed as to cast a shadow which by the motion of the sun would descend or rise on the steps. If such a staircase existed on the opposite side of the court to the king's chamber (and such external staircases were very common) the means by which the sign should be given were ready to hand. Several kinds of sundials have been suggested which would fulfil the conditions, and Ahaz from his connexion with the Assyrians may have become acquainted with them, for they were first invented by the Babylonians. But to none of these instruments could we easily apply the word 'steps' so as to call the contrivance, as the Hebrew does, 'the steps of Ahaz'.

With regard to the length of time which is indicated by the word 'step' we have nothing to guide us. There is no necessity therefore to understand an alteration in the shadow equivalent to ten hours of our day. If it were half or a quarter of that time, it would be a very appreciable change on the dial.

Of the speculations how the miracle was brought to pass none can be expected to be satisfactory. And we should bear with us, on such matters, Zophar's question (Job xi. 7) 'Canst thou by searching find out God?' There have been some who thought that the earth's motion was really reversed, but modern science has shown that by refraction, (of course in this case, taking place out of the ordinary course of nature,) such an alteration in the position of the shadow might be effected. Another opinion put forward is that the sun was eclipsed, in such wise that the upper limb was obscured, which would have the effect of lengthening all shadows, and thus causing the appearance of going backward on the dial of the stairs.

Bishop Hall's remarks are 'whether shall we more wonder at the measure of the love of God to Hezekiah, or at the power of Isaiah's faith in God? Out of both, either the sun goes back in heaven that his shadow may go back on earth; or the shadow no less miraculously goes back on earth, while the sun goes forward in heaven. It is true that the prophet speaks of the shadow, not of the sun; except perhaps because the motion of the sun is best discerned by the shadow, and the motion of the shadow is led by the course of the sun. Besides that, the demonstration of this miracle is reported to be local, in the dial of Ahaz, not universal in the sensible length of the day: withal the retreat of the sun had made a public and noted change in the frame of nature; this particular alteration of the shadow, in places limited, might satisfy no less without a confusive mutation in the face of the world. Whethersoever, to draw the sun back together with the shadow, or to draw the shadow back without the sun, was the proof of the Divine omnipotence, able therefore to draw back the life of Hezekiah fifteen degrees from the night of death to which it was hastening'.

12 At that time Berodach-baladan, the son of Baladan, king
of Babylon, sent letters and a present unto Hezekiah: for
13 he had heard that Hezekiah had been sick. And Hezekiah
hearkened unto them, and shewed them all the house of
his precious things, the silver, and the gold, and the spices,

12—21. An embassy to Hezekiah from the king of Babylon. Isaiah's message to Hezekiah. Death of Hezekiah. (2 Chron. xxxii. 25—33; Isaiah xxxix. 1—8.)

12. *Berodach-baladan*] The first part of the name is given as Merodach in Isaiah. This is the more correct form, but the interchange of the two labials is very easily made.

This king of Babylon is mentioned in the Assyrian inscriptions, as overthrown by Sargon the father of Sennacherib. He is said in the canon to have reigned 12 years, while Polyhistor gives him a brief reign of six months. It seems probable that both are correct. After the defeat by Sargon, at which time he had been king 12 years, he was for some years an exile, but afterwards finding means to recover his kingdom, he kept the power for a very brief space. Whether his embassy to Hezekiah is to be assigned to the longer or the shorter time of his kingship depends upon the date in Hezekiah's life at which his sickness occurred. If, as some have conjectured, that event was before Sennacherib's invasion the embassy must have been before Merodach's expulsion: if Hezekiah's disease followed after Sennacherib's invasion, then the Babylonian embassy must be placed in the brief six months' rule which Merodach had after his return. The date of Merodach's expulsion is placed B.C. 709, his return to the throne B.C. 702.

and a present] This is in the original, *minchah*, a present intended to procure alliance and aid.

for he had heard that Hezekiah had been sick] And probably had heard also of the wondrous sign which attended on his recovery. Whether the announcement of such a marvel would create special interest in Babylon the land of star-worship and star-study we can only conjecture. No doubt the congratulation on Hezekiah's recovery was only used as a pretext for an embassy which should gain over Judah, if possible, to the side of Babylon.

13. *And Hezekiah hearkened unto them*] In Isaiah we read he 'was glad of them', and there is no doubt that is the correct reading. The LXX. gives ἐχάρη, he rejoiced, in this passage. The difference in the Hebrew words is very slight. Here we have וישמע, in Isaiah וישמח.

and shewed them all the house of his precious things] On the margin both A.V. and R.V. give 'spicery' instead of 'precious things'; and the word (with a very slight difference of form) is used in that sense in Gen. xxxvii. 25; xliii. 11. But here as the house seems to have contained the various things which follow after, silver and gold as well as spices, perhaps the more general rendering is to be preferred. The storehouse which at first had its name from the aromatic treasures

and the precious ointment, and all the house of his armour, and all that was found in his treasures: there was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah shewed them not. Then came Isaiah the prophet unto king Hezekiah, and said unto him, What said these men? and from whence came they unto thee? And Hezekiah said, They are come from a far country, *even* from Babylon. And he said, What have they seen in thine house? And Hezekiah answered, All *the things* that *are* in mine house have they seen: there is nothing among my treasures that I have not shewed them. And Isaiah said unto Hezekiah, Hear the word of the LORD. Behold, the days come, that all that *is* in thine house, and *that* which thy fathers have laid up in store unto this day, shall be carried unto Babylon:

bestowed there, came in time to be used, without change of name, for the keeping of other things that were valuable.

precious ointment] R.V. **oil**. This is the more usual rendering. The stores would be of pure oil more likely than of manufactured ointment.

and all the house of his armour] R.V. omits 'all', which is not in the Hebrew text here, though it is in Isaiah. Hence the Massoretes have put it as a various reading on the margin of this verse.

The house of armour was no doubt 'the house of the forest of Lebanon', which Solomon built as an armoury, see notes on 1 Kings vii. 2; x. 17.

nothing...that Hezekiah shewed them not] He was clearly desirous to produce an impression of his wealth and consequent power. This proud spirit the Chronicler (2 Chron. xxxii. 25) describes thus, 'Hezekiah rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him: for his heart was lifted up: therefore there was wrath upon him and upon Judah and Jerusalem'.

14. *What said these men?*] Hezekiah does not answer this question. To tell of the proposals which had been made to him by the Babylonians, and of the remarks which had been called forth in praise of all that he had shewn them, would have provoked some reproach from God's prophet, who was probably averse to any alliance with foreign and idolatrous powers, knowing that in Jehovah there was present help so long as His people trusted in Him only.

even *from Babylon*] Except as one of the places whence colonists were brought to occupy Samaria (xvii. 24), Babylon has not before come into Jewish history. Soon it begins to figure largely, especially in the writings of the prophets, and at last becomes the victor of Jerusalem, and the scene of the long captivity of the two tribes.

15. *All* the things *that* are *in mine house*] R.V. **all that is in mine house**. The rendering of the same Hebrew in Isaiah. It has also the advantage of getting rid of the italics.

18 nothing shall be left, saith the LORD. And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take *away;* and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king
19 of Babylon. Then said Hezekiah unto Isaiah, Good *is* the word of the LORD which thou hast spoken. And he said,
20 *Is it* not *good*, if peace and truth be in my days? And the rest of the acts of Hezekiah, and all his might, and how he

17. *nothing shall be left*] Though some few Jews remained behind among the ruins of the desolated city, nothing worth taking as booty was left behind. For a description of the overthrow and the plunder, see below xxv. 9—17.

18. *thy sons...shall they take* away] This came to pass in the case of Manasseh, Hezekiah's own son (2 Chron. xxxiii. 11), who was carried as a prisoner to Babylon. That was, however, but the beginning of the sorrows to which this prophecy of Isaiah looked forward.

in the palace of the king of Babylon] Examples of Jews chosen for menial duties in the palace of Nebuchadnezzar at Babylon are found in Dan. i. 6.

19. *Good* is *the word of the Lord which thou hast spoken*] Bp Hall takes these words of Hezekiah as uttered in a proper spirit. 'The rod was smart, yet good Hezekiah kisses it. His heart struck him no less than the mouth of the prophet, meekly therefore doth he yield to this divine correction...God's children are neither waspish nor sullen, when they are chid or beaten: but patiently hold their backs to the stripes of a displeased mercy: knowing how much more God is to be magnified for what He might have done than repined at for what He hath done'.

Some however have thought that the sentiment of the next sentence is too full of selfishness to accord with such a perfect character. The Chronicler however (2 Chron. xxxii. 26) speaks of the king's humbling himself for his pride of heart.

Is it *not* good [R.V. **so**], *if peace and truth be* [R.V. **shall be**] *in my days?*] These words are spoken, as it seems, after reflection on the previous utterance, and seem to breathe a spirit of thankfulness mainly for the peace and security promised for Hezekiah's own lifetime. That this would be granted is implied because the prophecy speaks only of the evils which should come upon his descendants.

20. *And* [R.V. **Now**] *the rest of the acts of Hezekiah*] The Chronicler enlarges somewhat on Hezekiah's prosperity, 'The Lord guided [the king and his people] on every side. And many brought gifts unto the Lord to Jerusalem, and presents to Hezekiah, so that he was magnified in the sight of all nations from thenceforth'. This may account for the abundance of treasure which was ready to be shewn to the Babylonian embassy.

all his might] He seems among other things to have had much cattle, which was one of the chief forms of wealth in those days. He had (2 Chron. xxxii. 28, 29) 'stalls for all manner of beasts, and cotes

made a pool, and a conduit, and brought water into the city, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? And Hezekiah slept with his fathers: and 21
Manasseh his son reigned in his stead.

Manasseh *was* twelve years old when he *began* to reign, 21
and reigned fifty and five years in Jerusalem. And his

for flocks. Moreover he provided him cities, and possessions of flocks and herds in abundance: for God had given him substance very much'.

he made a [R.V. the] *pool, and a* [R.V. the] *conduit*] What Hezekiah did is more definitely described by the Chronicler. 'He stopped', it is said, 'the upper water course of Gihon'. By this is most likely meant what the king did before the invasion of Sennacherib. In some way, by covering over, or diverting, he conveyed the waters of this spring into the city, and made a pool or reservoir to hold a supply for the city at a much lower level, in the valley between the two hills on which Jerusalem was mainly built. This operation the Chronicler describes by 'he brought it (the water) straight down to the west side of the city of David'. This would be done by an underground passage.

in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah] The sources of Hezekiah's history are called in 2 Chronicles 'the vision of Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz, *and* the book of the kings of Judah and Israel'. How far these are identical with what is meant by the verse before us is not clear. But from the history which is produced in the prophecy of Isaiah, we feel sure that there cannot have been much difference in the sources whence the accounts were derived, though the Chronicler has dwelt much more fully on the religious reforms of the king, than suited the plan of the compiler of Kings.

21. *Hezekiah slept with his fathers*] The Chronicler adds 'and they buried him in the chiefest (R.V. the ascent) of the sepulchres of the sons of David; and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem did him honour at his death'. The change of rendering in the R.V. is necessary and shews us that it was not in the tombs of the kings that Hezekiah was buried, but in some place of an elevated character near thereto. From this time the kings of Judah are no longer laid in the tombs of the kings.

CHAP. XXI. **1—9.** ACCESSION OF MANASSEH KING OF JUDAH. HIS EXCESSIVE IDOLATRIES. (2 Chron. xxxiii. 1—9.)

1. *Manasseh* was *twelve years old*] 'At last, some three years after his recovery, Hezekiah hath a son: but such a one, as, if he could have foreseen, orbity had been a blessing' (Bp Hall).

fifty and five years] A reign longer than his father's whole life, in spite of the addition of fifteen years; and longer than the reign of any other king of Judah or Israel.

2 mother's name *was* Hephzi-bah. And he did *that* which
was evil in the sight of the LORD, after the abominations of
the heathen, whom the LORD cast out before the children of
3 Israel. For he built *up* again the high places which Heze-
kiah his father had destroyed; and he reared up altars for
Baal, and made a grove, as did Ahab king of Israel; and
4 worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them. And
he built altars in the house of the LORD, of which the LORD
5 said, In Jerusalem will I put my name. And he built altars
for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of

Hephzi-bah] The mother's name is not mentioned in Chronicles, it is the name which Isaiah in his prophecy (lxii. 4) gives to the restored Zion, 'my delight is in her'.

2. *after the abominations of the heathen*] He followed all the idolatrous practices of the nations of Canaan, but as is said below, in verse 11, it was greater sin in him than in them, because he sinned in spite of knowledge.

3. *For he built* up *again the high places*] The R.V. omits 'up'. On Hezekiah's destruction of the high places, see 2 Chron. xxx. 14; xxxi. 1.

and he reared up altars for Baal] The Chronicler says for 'the Baalim', by which is most likely intended the various aspects or attributes under which Baal was worshipped. The LXX. uses the feminine article and says the altars were reared *τῇ* Βάαλ; which is due to the use of the word בשׁת *bosheth* = shame, which is feminine, to avoid the abominated name בעל *Baal*. The desire to avoid this word is seen in proper names, among which *Ishbosheth* is put for *Eshbaal*, the name of a son of Saul (1 Chron. viii. 33; ix. 39), also *Mephibosheth* is used instead of *Meribbaal* (cf. 2 Sam. ix. 6 with 1 Chron. viii. 34) and *Jerubbesheth* for *Jerubbaal* (cf. Jud. vi. 32 with 2 Sam. xi. 21).

and made a grove] R.V. **an Asherah**. The Chronicler here too uses the plural 'Asheroth' (A. V. groves). On Asherah, which was probably a wooden image of a goddess so called, see note on 1 Kings xiv. 15 and 2 Kings xiii. 6.

Ahab king of Israel] Who first, at the instigation of Jezebel his wife, introduced the worship of Baal and Asherah into Israel from Phœnicia.

worshipped all the host of heaven] See note on xvii. 16.

4. *he built altars in the house of the Lord, of which*] R.V. **whereof** &c. It seems most likely that the following verse explains what is meant by this. The altars were in the courts of the temple, not within the temple building. Azariah had intruded himself within the holy place (2 Chron. xxvi. 16). Even for his most solemn prayer Hezekiah prayed toward the sanctuary. Intrusion within the walls would have been specially noted.

5. *the two courts of the house of the Lord*] On the two courts of the temple, spoken of respectively as 'the inner' or 'higher' court, or 'the

the LORD. And he made his son pass through the fire, 6
and observed times, and used enchantments, and dealt with

court of the priests, and 'the great court' which must have enclosed the inner, see note on 1 Kings vi. 36.

6. *And he made his son*] The LXX. represents 'sons' here, and the Chronicler has the plural in the parallel passage, 'He caused his *children* to pass through the fire in the valley of the son of Hinnom'. Probably the expression in Chronicles only means that he practised this Moloch-worship, and the plural number need not be literally pressed.

pass through the fire] See note on xvi. 3. 'The valley of the son of Hinnom' mentioned by the Chronicler was a ravine on the south and west of Jerusalem, the south-east extremity of which had the name of *Tophet*. Because of the horrors which had been perpetrated there, the place was defiled, and converted into a receptacle of all that was foul and offensive, for the destruction of which constant fires were kept burning. For this reason the name *Ge Hinnom*, modified into *Gehenna*, came to be employed to designate the region of eternal torment.

and observed times] R. V. **practised augury**. The rendering of A.V. is from the Vulgate, but that version in other places represents the sense as being 'to use augury'. (See Vulg. of Isaiah ii. 6; lvii. 3.) In the LXX. the renderings express the gathering of omens, either from sounds heard or from the flight of birds. The Jewish interpreters say it means one who decides by certain signs what days are good for trade, and which to travel on, &c. This is the idea in observing times, but the R.V. appears to embrace the whole of the senses given to the word.

used enchantments] The word is that which is used Num. **xxiv. 1** of Balaam going 'to seek for enchantments'. It refers to gathering of signs as the superstitious are wont to do, from this or that, whether they are to do or leave undone any undertaking they contemplate.

dealt with [R.V. **with them that had**] *familiar spirits*] The Hebrew word *Ob*, usually translated 'one that hath a familiar spirit', means originally 'a bottle'. It is applied first of all to the spirit supposed to reside within the persons so possessed; then to the person himself. After that because the answers were supposed to be derived from the spirits of the dead, it was applied to one called up from the dead. So 1 Sam. xxviii. 8 Saul asks at Endor 'Divine unto me by *the familiar spirit*'. The second use of the word is exemplified in the verse before us, where those that deal with the spirit are called *Ob*, and the third sense is found in Isaiah xxix. 4 where the voice of an *Ob* is said to come out of the ground and to whisper out of the dust. The LXX. renders the word by *ἐγγαστρίμυθος*, ventriloquist, probably because the utterances of ventriloquists seem to come from within the speaker without motion of the lips.

The verb rendered 'deal with' is literally 'made'. Hence it has been thought that Manasseh gave offices to such persons as are here spoken of, and appointed (see R.V. marg.) them as official diviners.

familiar spirits and wizards: he wrought much wickedness
7 in the sight of the LORD, to provoke *him* to anger. And he set a graven image of the grove that he had made in the house, of which the LORD said to David, and to Solomon his son, In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all tribes of Israel, will I put my name for
8 ever: neither will I make the feet of Israel move any more out of the land which I gave their fathers; only if they will observe to do according to all that I have commanded them, and according to all the law that my servant Moses com-
9 manded them. But they hearkened not: and Manasseh seduced them to do more evil than did the nations whom the LORD destroyed before the children of Israel.

10 And the LORD spake by his servants the prophets, saying,
11 Because Manasseh king of Judah hath done these abominations, *and* hath done wickedly above all that the Amorites

wizards] The Hebrew word is connected with the verb 'to know'. Hence *wizard*, which implies one who is supposed to be preternaturally *wise* well represents the word.

7. *A graven image of the grove*] R.V. **the graven image of Asherah.** Though usually of wood, such images were also made of silver and carved in stone. The image in question here would be specially grand in view of the position it was to occupy.

the Lord said to David] For the words to David cf. 2 Sam. vii. 13; and to Solomon 1 Kings viii. 20.

8. *neither will I make* [R.V. **cause**] *the feet of Israel move*] R.V. **to wander.** The verb has the notion of a restless unsettled state. It is used (Gen. iv. 12, 14) of Cain as a 'vagabond'.

only if] R.V. **if only.** At the end of this clause there are not two sets of commands spoken of. 'That which I have commanded them' is only explained by 'the law that my servant Moses commanded them'.

9. *Manasseh seduced them to do more evil than &c.*] R.V. **to do that which is evil more than,** &c. The R.V. represents the Hebrew more closely. The phrase in Chronicles is 'to err *and* to do worse than the heathen'. For Judah sinned against light and knowledge.

10—15. GOD'S MESSAGE OF PUNISHMENT. (2 Chron. xxxiii. 10.)

10. *the Lord spake*] The Chronicler says God's warnings were sent both to the king and to his people but they would not hearken.

11. *all that the Amorites*] The Amorites are put for the inhabitants of Canaan generally, though strictly the Amorites, with the Hittites and the Jebusites, were the mountaineer portion of the people, whilst the Canaanites dwelt by the sea and by the Jordan. See Num. xiii. 29.

did, which *were* before him, and hath made Judah also to sin with his idols: therefore thus saith the LORD God of 12
Israel, Behold, I *am* bringing *such* evil upon Jerusalem and Judah, that whosoever heareth of it, both his ears shall tingle. And I will stretch over Jerusalem the line of Sa- 13
maria, and the plummet of the house of Ahab: and I will wipe Jerusalem as *a man* wipeth a dish, wiping *it*, and turning *it* upside down. And I will forsake the remnant of 14
mine inheritance, and deliver them into the hand of their

12. *therefore*] Here again the LXX. translates the Hebrew word by *οὐχ οὕτως*. See note on i. 3.

I am *bringing* [R.V. I bring] such *evil*] The R.V. prints 'such' in ordinary type. For the expression 'the ears shall tingle' cf. 1 Sam. iii. 11; Jer. xix. 3. In both these passages the phrase is used in connexion with utter overthrow, in the one, of Eli's house, in the other, of Jerusalem. The sins there enumerated by Jeremiah afford a parallel to the wickedness of Manasseh's reign.

13. *the line of Samaria, and the plummet of the house of Ahab*] The figures are taken from the occupation of the builder. The builder employs line and plummet that he may carry out his work exactly according to the plan prescribed. But here the pattern is one of utter destruction, which God Himself threatens to carry out after the fashion of Samaria and the house of Ahab, which the previous generation had beheld utterly destroyed. Samaria and the house of Ahab were famous for building (see 1 Kings xxxii. 39 note). Hence the peculiar fitness of the figure. These great builders, with all that they had built, were swept away and just so should it be with Jerusalem. The way in which a portion of the judgement was carried out is described by the Chronicler: 'The Lord brought upon them the captains of the host of the king of Assyria, which took Manasseh in chains (R.V.) and bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon'.

as a man *wipeth a dish*] The description is of a thing that is done with, and will be used no more. 'To turn it upside down', is literally 'to turn it upon the face thereof', a rendering which brings out very completely the intention of using the dish no more. Such God declares will be His manner of dealing with Jerusalem. The verb rendered 'wipe' is the same which is used Gen. vii. 4, 'Every living substance...*will I destroy*', and in Num. v. 23 'he shall *blot them out*', and in the solemn sentence, Exod. xxxii. 33, 'him will I *blot out* of my book'. The original very markedly shews that God's *wiping* was to be *a wiping out*.

14. *And I will forsake* [R.V. cast off] *the remnant*] 'Forsake' need not necessarily imply 'a punishment that has been deserved' which is what is here intended. Hence R.V. has substituted 'cast off' or 'reject' in many instances. Cf. Jud. vi. 13; Jer. xv. 16; xxiii. 33, 39, &c.

enemies; and they shall become a prey and a spoil to all
15 their enemies; because they have done *that* which *was* evil
in my sight, and have provoked me to anger, since the day
their fathers came forth out of Egypt, even unto this day.
16 Moreover Manasseh shed innocent blood very much, till
he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another; beside
his sin where*with* he made Judah to sin, in doing *that* which
17 *was* evil in the sight of the LORD. Now the rest of the acts
of Manasseh, and all that he did, and his sin that he sinned,
are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the
18 kings of Judah? And Manasseh slept with his fathers, and
was buried in the garden of his own house, in the garden of
Uzza: and Amon his son reigned in his stead.

15. that *which* was [R.V. is] *evil*] As the words are God's the present is the more appropriate tense.

16—18. OTHER WICKEDNESS OF MANASSEH. HIS DEATH. (2 Chron. xxxiii. 18—20.)

16. *Manasseh shed innocent blood very much*] This is alluded to again in xxiv. 4 as the cause of God's continued anger against Judah. It is singular that the Chronicler makes no special mention of this particular offence. Josephus on the contrary (*Ant.* x. 3, 1) says 'He did not even spare the prophets, but even of these he slew some daily (*καθ' ἡμέραν*) so that Jerusalem ran with blood'. The tradition that Isaiah himself was one of the sufferers in this slaughter was current among early Christian legends, and some have taken the mention of 'sawing asunder' (Heb. xi. 37) as an allusion to his fate.

from one end to another] Lit. 'from mouth to mouth'. See note on 2 Kings x. 21.

17. *the rest of the acts of Manasseh*] The compiler of Kings says no word about Manasseh's repentance, which forms a considerable part of his history in Chronicles (2 Chron. xxxiii. 12—19). There we read that in his distress he besought the Lord and the Lord heard him and brought him back out of Babylon. 'Then Manasseh knew that the Lord he was God'. He also built parts of the walls of Jerusalem, and strengthened the cities of Judah. He took away the strange gods and built up the altar of the Lord. Mention is also made of his prayer, of which we have an apocryphal version preserved, and of the seers which spake unto him. There is quoted also as authority the history of Hozai (R.V.). Why the writer of Kings tells neither of Manasseh's captivity nor of his repentance and return is not easy to understand. Perhaps as these events made no difference in the succession, and as he deals with the political rather than with the religious history of the nation, he preferred to omit any record of either the imprisonment of the king or his release.

18. *in the garden of his own house*] See note on xx. 21 above.

Amon *was* twenty and two years old when he *began* to reign, and he reigned two years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Meshullemeth, the daughter of Haruz of Jotbah. And he did *that* which *was* evil in the sight of the LORD, as his father Manasseh did. And he walked in all the way that his father walked *in*, and served the idols that his father served, and worshipped them: and he forsook the LORD God of his fathers, and walked not in the way of the LORD. And the servants of Amon conspired against him, and slew the king in his own house. And the people of the land slew all them that had conspired against king Amon; and the people of the land made Josiah his son king in his stead. Now the rest of the acts of Amon

19 20 21 22 23 24 25

19—26. AMON KING OF JUDAH. HIS WICKED REIGN AND DEATH. (2 Chron. xxxiii. 21—25.)

19. *Jotbah*] This place is not mentioned elsewhere in the Bible. It is generally thought to be the same as *Jotbath* or *Jotbathah*, mentioned (Num. xxxiii. 33; Deut. x. 7) as a station of the Israelites in their wanderings. It is called 'a land of torrents of water', so that it would be most likely a sort of oasis in the desert.

20. *as his father Manasseh did*] We can see from the notice of Manasseh in 2 Chron. xxxiii. 17 that his repentance did not undo all the evil he had brought into the nation. 'The people did sacrifice still in the high places, *yet* unto the Lord their God only'. And on Amon, his son, the reformation of the father seems to have had no effect. 'An ill guise is easily taken up, it is not so easily left. After a common depravation of religion, it is hard to return unto the first purity: as when a garment is deeply soiled it cannot without many lavers recover the former cleanness' (Bp Hall).

21. *served the idols that his father served*] i.e. Making again the same sort of graven images, which we must suppose Manasseh in his repentance had broken in pieces.

22. *and he forsook the Lord God*] The Chronicler says 'Amon trespassed more and more.'

23. *the servants of Amon conspired against him*] The servants must be the court officers who were close about the king. The place where he was killed, 'his own house', shews this, and the present destruction of Amon's murderers by 'the people of the land' proves that it was no popular movement against the king, but only some private intrigue. The people also shewed their attachment to the house of David by immediately placing Amon's son, Josiah, on the throne.

and slew the king] R.V. **put the king to death.** The change is made to shew that the word is not the same as that translated 'slew' in the next verse.

which he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chro-
26 nicles of the kings of Judah? And he was buried in his sepulchre in the garden of Uzza: and Josiah his son reigned in his stead.

22 Josiah *was* eight years old when he *began* to reign, and he reigned thirty and one years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Jedidah, the daughter of Adaiah of
2 Boscath. And he did *that* which *was* right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in all the way of David his father,
3 and turned not aside *to* the right hand or *to* the left. And it came to pass in the eighteenth year of king Josiah, *that*

26. *in his sepulchre in the garden of Uzza*] See above, verse 18. This was evidently a new burial-place contrived for themselves by the kings, in close neighbourhood to the royal palace.

CHAP. XXII. **1—7.** JOSIAH KING OF JUDAH. HIS GOOD REIGN. HE BEGINS TO REPAIR THE TEMPLE. (2 Chron. xxxiv. 1—13.)

1. *Josiah* was *eight years old when he* began *to reign*] Called to the throne as such a mere child the new king must have been under some guardianship, and however good his natural desires may have been, he could hardly have commenced the great reforms which he brought about until he had been some time on the throne.

Boscath] R. V. **Bozcath.** This latter is the form of the word in Josh. xv. 39, where it is mentioned between Lachish and Eglon among the cities of the inheritance of the tribe of Judah. It must have been in the lowlands of Judæa, but its site is not identified. It is mentioned only in these two passages of the Bible.

3. *And it came to pass in the eighteenth year*] The Chronicler gives two dates anterior to this for events in the course of Josiah's life. He says (2 Chron. xxxiv. 3—7 R. V.) 'In the eighth year of his reign while he was yet young, he began to seek after the God of David his father, and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem from the high places, and the Asherim, and the graven images and the molten images. And they brake down the altars of the Baalim in his presence, and the sun-images that were on high above them he hewed down, and the Asherim and the graven images and the molten images he brake in pieces, and made dust of them and strewed it upon the graves of them that had sacrificed unto them. And he burnt the bones of the priests upon their altars and purged Judah and Jerusalem. And *so did he* in the cities of Manasseh and Ephraim and Simeon, even unto Naphtali, in their ruins round about. And he brake down the altars and beat the Asherim and the graven images into powder, and hewed down all the sun-images throughout all the land of Israel, and returned to Jerusalem'. It is clear that we have here, a most comprehensive summary of the destruction of

the king sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, the son of Meshullam, the scribe, *to* the house of the LORD, saying, Go up 4
to Hilkiah the high priest, that he may sum the silver
which is brought *into* the house of the LORD, which the
keepers of the door have gathered of the people: and let 5

idolatry in the whole of Josiah's reign and not what he began to do in his twelfth year. The Chronicler however having given us the date at which Josiah first manifested his disposition to destroy the idols out of the land, includes in the same sentences all that was done by the king in the after part of his reign. We cannot but think that the chief impulse toward the utter destruction of the idols was given, as the writer of Kings tells us (xxiii. 3) when the king made a covenant to walk after the Lord, according to the words of the book of the Law, and all the people stood to the covenant. Then began the extermination of all remaining traces of idolatry, which the king himself had begun to remove in some degree in his twelfth year.

The LXX. adds to the date given in this verse, *ἐν τῷ μηνὶ τῷ ὀγδόῳ*, 'in the eighth month', but with no warrant from the original.

the king sent Shaphan...the scribe] The event on which all else in Josiah's reformation seems to hinge is the restoration of the temple. There it was that the book of the Law was discovered which stirred both king and people to attempt a thorough reformation. Therefore the writer of Kings passes to that undertaking without pausing over minor matters which preceded it.

Shaphan...the scribe] Shaphan whose father and grandfather are here mentioned, was the father of Ahikam mentioned below (verse 12) and of Gemariah (Jer. xxxvi. 10, 11, 12), and the grandfather of Gedaliah (Jer. xxxix. 14; xl. 5, 9, 11, &c.). The office of Scribe in his time was clearly an important one. He is sent by the king to take oversight of the funds for the restoration of the temple, and seems to have ranked with the governor of the city and the recorder. We have no notice of Shaphan's afterlife. He must have been advanced in years at this time, for thirty-five years after this date his grandson Gedaliah was set by the Chaldæans to be governor of the country.

4. *Hilkiah the high priest*] From 1 Chron. vi. 13 it seems that he was the son of Shallum, and judging from Ezra vii. 1 he appears to have been an ancestor of Ezra.

that he may sum the silver] R.V. **money**. With a view to a restoration of the temple, a collection of money like that in the reign of Joash (see above, chap. xii.) had been in progress, and now, acting on the precedent of that previous time, as appears from the great similarity in the language used to describe them both, Josiah sets about the repair of all that had fallen into decay during the seven and fifty years which had passed since the death of Hezekiah.

the keepers of the door have gathered of the people] The keepers of the door were the priests (see xii. 9) who had charge of the treasury into which the offerings of the devout were put. In Chronicles they

them deliver it into the hand of the doers of the work, that have the oversight of the house of the LORD: and let them give it to the doers of the work which *is* in the house of the
6 LORD, to repair the breaches of the house, unto carpenters, and builders, and masons, and to buy timber and hewn
7 stone to repair the house. Howbeit there was no reckoning made with them of the money that was delivered into their hand, because they dealt faithfully.
8 And Hilkiah the high priest said unto Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD.

are said to be the Levites. It is noted in 2 Chron. that money was not only gathered from Judah and Benjamin, but also from the tribes of Manasseh and Ephraim, and from all the remnant of Israel.

5. *into the hand of the doers of the work*] R.V. **of the workmen.** Two sets of people are here both called 'doers of the work' (R.V. **workmen**), first, those who have the oversight, whom we should now call perhaps 'contractors' or 'architects': and secondly, the actual artificers, carpenters, &c. The former received the money in gross, and paid it out for wages to the several classes of workmen. So R.V. also translates the close of this verse 'to the workmen which are in the house of the Lord'.

6. *unto* [R.V. adds **the**] *carpenters, and* [R.V. **to the**] *builders, and* [R.V. **to the**] *masons*] All the words are definite in the original.

and to buy [R.V. **for buying**] *timber*] The contractors had to provide both materials and labour from the money which was put at their disposal, and they were apparently persons who could be trusted to make the best possible provision without oversight.

7. *no reckoning made with them*] Compare the almost exactly similar account in xii. 15. There is no doubt that over such labours the hearts of men are enlarged and they work from love of what they are doing, and so can be trusted to lay out all money to the best advantage, and often to supplement with their own what has been put into their hands. From such overseers to ask an account would be an insult. The Chronicler, as if drawing from official reports, preserves the names of these overseers.

8—20. HILKIAH THE HIGH PRIEST FINDS THE BOOK OF THE LAW. EFFECT OF THE DISCOVERY ON JOSIAH. THE WORDS OF HULDAH THE PROPHETESS. (2 Chron. xxxiv. **14—28.**)

8. *I have found the book of the law in the house of the Lord*] Much discussion has arisen about the discovery which this verse records. Before entering on the question of what it was which Hilkiah found, it may be well to notice briefly the circumstances of the time. Josiah had succeeded his father at the age of eight, and in the previous fifty-seven years the kingdom had twice over been deluged with all the

And Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it.
And Shaphan the scribe came to the king, and brought the 9

abominations of idolatry. The greater proportion therefore of the inhabitants of Jerusalem would have had little chance of knowing the law and its requirements. The temple had been neglected, perhaps closed, during a large part of these years. If we may judge of what would be needed now by what had been found necessary in Hezekiah's time (2 Chron. xxix. 5—7) the holy place would have become foul with neglect, the doors shut up, the lamps unlit, no incense within, no sacrifices without the building. As for the book of the Law, whatever might have been its contents at this time, rolls containing it would certainly not be numerous. In the possession of the priests they might be expected to be found, but only here and there. The copy made (according to the Law) for the use of the king would most certainly have perished. We must lay aside, in thinking of this time, all our modern conceptions about books and about a number of copies. The priests, in the matter of services and sacrifices in the temple, taught the people by word of mouth what was proper in every part of the ceremonial, and much of the priestly training was traditional, passed on from one generation of priests to another. That an authoritative copy of the Law, whatever it may have comprised, would be supplied for preservation in the temple we certainly might expect, but after nearly sixty years of neglect of the temple and its services we can feel little surprise that neither Hilkiah nor his fellows were aware of its existence, and that Josiah knew concerning it only what had been taught him by the priests. The half-century previous to Josiah's accession had been a period of utter darkness both for people, priests and king.

Hilkiah gave [R.V. **delivered**] *the book to Shaphan*] The same verb is rendered 'deliver' in verses 9 and 10 just following. The scribe Shaphan was the person to whom such a discovered roll would naturally be brought. Neither Hilkiah nor Shaphan are surprised at what has been found. The high priest describes it to Shaphan by a form of words which must have had a definite meaning before he used them. That is, there was known among the priests, and to some degree no doubt among the people, a collection of precepts which was called by the name of 'the book of the Law'. Therefore the *finding* mentioned in this verse was not a discovery of something unknown before, but the rescuing of the temple-copy of the Law from the hiding-place in which it had long lain (perhaps in one of the chambers round about the temple). Hilkiah knows what it is which he has come upon, the scribe with professional instinct begins to peruse it. Neither of them shews any ignorance or any surprise at the sight or perusal.

9. *And Shaphan the scribe came to the king*] The LXX. has for these words 'And he went in unto the king in the house of the Lord', but with no apparent warrant. Shaphan, bearing the book with him (2 Chron. xxxiv. 16), comes and gives a calm account of the business on which he had been sent at first, viz. the enquiry and arrangement about the money which had been gathered. When that part of the

king word again, and said, Thy servants have gathered the money that was found in the house, and have delivered it into the hand of them that do the work, that have the over-
10 sight *of* the house of the LORD. And Shaphan the scribe shewed the king, saying, Hilkiah the priest hath delivered
11 me a book. And Shaphan read it before the king. And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the
12 book of the law, that he rent his clothes. And the king commanded Hilkiah the priest, and Ahikam the son of

business is despatched, he tells the king concerning the book that has been discovered. On this 'Book of the Law' see Introduction, pp. xlvi.—xlviii.

Thy servants have gathered [R.V. **emptied out**] *the money*] The verb, in most of its forms is used of 'pouring out', and now and then (see A.V. margin) of 'melting' metals. Here what seems to be intended is that Hilkiah and Shaphan had removed the offerings from the chest at the temple, and had found out what sum was in hand for the work of restoration.

them that do the work [R.V. **the workmen**], *that have the oversight*] As above in verse 5. The scribe and the priest pass on the money to the contractors.

10. *Shaphan...shewed* [R.V. **told**] *the king*] The R.V. has taken the rendering in Chronicles where the Hebrew is the same. 'Shewed' is open to a wrong sense.

Hilkiah...hath delivered me a book] Though Shaphan is represented as speaking of *a* book, there can be no question that he knew what the book was. 'The book of the Law' had a well-defined meaning for him. How far the king understood what such a book contained is questionable. The sacrifices and other religious observances in which he had taken part he of course understood. It is manifest that there was in this book something more than he had known before, from his alarm when he heard it read.

And Shaphan read it] i.e. Portions of it. The Hebrew in 2 Chronicles expresses this, and says 'he read *in it*'.

11. *he rent his clothes*] From what is said afterwards in verse 19, we can see that the portions which affected the king were such passages as Deut. xxviii. There in verse 15, it is said, 'If thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God...all these *curses* shall come upon thee'. And in verse 45 'all these *curses* shall come upon thee, and shall pursue thee and overtake thee till thou be destroyed'. And in verse 37, 'Thou shalt become *an astonishment, a proverb* and *a byword* among all nations whither the Lord shall lead thee'.

12. *Ahikam the son of Shaphan*] Ahikam was father of Gedaliah (Jer. xxxix. 14), and continued in an official position in the reign of Jehoiakim (Jer. xxvi. 24). Ahikam must have been a person of ripe years to be sent on such an errand as this to Huldah. Hence Shaphan his father must have been of an advanced age. (See above on verse 3.)

Shaphan, and Achbor the son of Michaiah, and Shaphan the scribe, and Asahiah a servant of the king's, saying, Go 13
ye, inquire of the LORD for me, and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that is found: for great *is* the wrath of the LORD that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this book, to do according unto all that which is written concerning us. So Hilkiah the priest, and Ahikam, and 14
Achbor, and Shaphan, and Asahiah, went unto Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tikvah, the son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe; (now she dwelt in Jeru-

Achbor the son of Michaiah] R.V. **Micaiah.** Perhaps the father of Elnathan, Jer. xxvi. 22; xxxvi. 12. In the parallel place of Chronicles (2 Chron. xxxiv. 20) he is called Abdon the son of Micah.

Asahiah a servant of the king's] R.V. **Asaiah the king's servant.** The name is so spelt in 2 Chron. xxxiv. 20. 'Servant' in such phrases signifies some person of influence in close attendance on the king. See on v. 13 above.

13. *our fathers have not hearkened*] The two reigns of Manasseh and Amon had led the whole people away to idolatry. Of the former of these kings it is said (xxii. 11) 'He hath made Judah also to sin with his idols'. For two generations at the least the retrospect of king Josiah was a very dark one.

14. *Huldah the prophetess*] Except Miriam the sister of Moses, who is called 'a prophetess' in Exod. xv. 20, and Deborah (Jud. iv. 4) in the days of the judges, Huldah is the only woman spoken of in the Old Testament as endowed with prophetic gifts. For the term 'prophetess' as used in Is. viii. 3 signifies only 'a prophet's wife'. Of Huldah we know only what is told us in this history. She lived in Jerusalem, and her husband, Shallum, was probably a Levite, as he had charge of what must have been the wardrobe for the vestments of the priests. The narrative here shews in what esteem she was held both by king and people, and her language in her answer has quite the prophetic character. She speaks not her own words but the message of the Lord the God of Israel, and even as Isaiah in the case of Hezekiah, she promises to Josiah, in the Lord's name, that his supplication shall be answered. For 'wife' the LXX. has *μητέρα*, 'the mother', of Shallum, but with no warrant from the Hebrew.

Tikvah...Harhas] These names appear in 2 Chron. xxxiv. 22 as *Tikvath* and *Hasrah*.

keeper of the wardrobe] See above on x. 22. There seems no doubt that the robes here alluded to are the robes of the priests, which are called by the same Hebrew word (בְּגָדִים) in Exod. xxviii. 2, 3, 4; xxix. 5 and many subsequent passages of Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers.

15 salem in the college;) and they communed with her. And
she said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel,
16 Tell the man that sent you to me, Thus saith the LORD,
Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the
inhabitants thereof, *even* all the words of the book which the
17 king of Judah hath read: because they have forsaken me,
and have burnt incense unto other gods, that they might
provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands;
therefore my wrath shall be kindled against this place, and
18 shall not be quenched. But to the king of Judah which
sent you to inquire of the LORD, thus shall ye say to him,
Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, *As touching* the words
19 which thou hast heard; because thine heart was tender, and
thou hast humbled thyself before the LORD, when thou

in the college] R.V. **in the second quarter.** The Hebrew word 'Mishneh' here rendered 'college' has always something to do with 'second' or 'double', and in Zeph. i. 10 it clearly refers to a part of the city of Jerusalem, and A.V. there translates it by 'second' (R.V. second quarter). Probably it was some additional suburban portion of the city, which was known by this name.

15. *Tell* [R.V. adds **ye**] *the man that sent you to* [R.V. **unto**] *me*] At first she places king and people all on one level and denounces the woes that shall surely come upon the nation for their sins, on all alike.

16. *all the words of the book which the king of Judah hath read*] The Chronicler says, 'all *the curses* that are written in the book which they have read before the king of Judah'. The curses are such as those contained in Deut. xxviii. already alluded to, and in Lev. xxvi. 14—39.

17. *works*] R.V. **work**] *of their hands*] The Hebrew has the singular.

my wrath shall be kindled against this place and [R.V. adds **it**] *shall not be quenched*] The king in verse 13 used the expression 'wrath of the Lord'. And the same expression is found in Lev. xxvi. 28, (though there both A.V. and R.V. have 'fury'). The language of that book must have been present to the mind of both Josiah and Huldah.

18. *But to* [R.V. **unto**] *the king of Judah*] A special message is sent to the king, because he had set about a reform as soon as he heard the words of the Law, and had sent to God's prophetess to obtain guidance in the work he felt it his duty to undertake.

19. *thine heart was tender*] The adjective is often used of those that are fainthearted and feeble. Here it has a good sense and means 'easily touched', 'susceptible'.

and thou hast humbled [R.V. **didst humble**] *thyself*] For grace shewn to such humiliation even in a worse case cf. 1 Kings xxi. 29.

heardest what I spake against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, that *they* should become a desolation and a curse, and hast rent thy clothes, and wept before me; I also have heard *thee*, saith the LORD. Behold therefore, I 20
will gather thee unto thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered into thy grave in peace; and thine eyes shall not see all the evil which I will bring upon this place. And they brought the king word again.

And the king sent, and they gathered unto him all the 23
elders of Judah and of Jerusalem. And the king went up 2
into the house of the LORD, and all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with him, and the priests, and the prophets, and all the people, both small and great:

I also have heard thee] The sentence implies 'Because thou didst hear me'.

20. *into thy grave in peace*] i. e. None of these evils denounced against the nation shall come to pass in thy days. As far as they are concerned thou shalt die in peace. The promise has no reference to the war with Egypt (xxiii. 29) in which Josiah was slain at Megiddo.

CHAP. XXIII. 1—14. JOSIAH'S COVENANT TO SERVE THE LORD. DESTRUCTION OF IDOLATRY, AND REMOVAL OF IDOLATROUS PRIESTS. (2 Chron. xxxiv. 3—7, 29—33.)

1. *And the king sent, and they gathered*] The whole proceeding described in the first three verses of this chapter may be compared with the similar covenant-making in the reign of Joash (xi. 14—17). That was also followed by a destruction of the objects of idolatry.

2. *and the priests, and the prophets, and all the people*] These were the elders spoken of in the previous verse, the representative men of the principal classes from every part of the kingdom. In the parallel place in 2 Chron. xxxiv. 30, the 'prophets' are not mentioned in this enumeration, but in their place the 'Levites' appear. This variation is no doubt due to the different state of things which existed when the two books were compiled. In the days of the compiler of Kings, the effect of the schools of the prophets had not died away, and he could understand that men who had belonged to them would in Josiah's time form a considerable class, and be mentioned as such in the original record. When the Chronicler lived things were very different. Prophets, as a class of men trained in religious societies with a view to future work among the people, had ceased to exist, while the Levites had come into considerable prominence. Meaning therefore to represent the influential persons of the time as present at Josiah's solemn gathering, he mentions 'Levites' who in his own time were a distinguished body, omitting 'prophets' as they were no longer found in the same numbers, nor constituted so distinct a class, when this assembly was collected in Josiah's reign.

small and great] i. e. The poor and the rich.

and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the
3 covenant which was found in the house of the LORD. And
the king stood by a pillar, and made a covenant before the
LORD, to walk after the LORD, and to keep his command-
ments and his testimonies and his statutes with all *their*
heart and all *their* soul, to perform the words of this cove-
nant that were written in this book. And all the people
4 stood to the covenant. And the king commanded Hilkiah
the high priest, and the priests of the second order; and
the keepers of the door, to bring forth out of the temple of
the LORD all the vessels that were made for Baal, and for
the grove, and for all the host of heaven: and he burnt
them without Jerusalem in the fields of Kidron, and carried
5 the ashes of them *unto* Beth-el. And he put down the ido-

the book of the covenant] The expression is found in Exod. xxiv. 7, and there seems to refer to the contents of the chapters Exod. xx—xxiii. But there is little doubt that, however brief the first form of statutes may have been to which this name was given, it came in time to include the additional laws of Leviticus and Deuteronomy, and that to some such expanded set of laws the name is here applied.

3. *And the king stood by a* [R.V. **the**] *pillar*] See xi. 14 and the notes there.

to walk after the Lord &c.] The words of the covenant are dictated by Deut. xiii. 4.

all their [R.V. **his**] *heart and all* their [R.V. **his**] *soul*] This was the king's own solemn pledge.

to perform [R.V. **confirm**] *the words of this covenant*] 'Confirm' is the rendering of this verb in A.V. in a very similar passage (Deut. xxvii. 26) 'Cursed be he that *confirmeth* not all the words of this law to do them'.

4. *priests of the second order*] i.e. Those who were next in rank to the high priest (cf. Jer. lii. 24).

the keepers of the door] Who would be of the priests or Levites, and so could enter within the holy place.

to bring forth...all the vessels that were made for Baal] We see therefore that the Baal worship had been fully established within the holy place.

and for the grove] **the Asherah.** See note on 1 Kings xiv. 15. The same change is also made in the 6th verse.

in the fields of Kidron] These were where the valley of the Kidron growing wider offered space for such a burning. We can again see that the destruction was in agreement with the commands in Deut. vii. 25; xii. 3.

and carried the ashes of them unto *Beth-el*] That the refuse of all these objects of idolatry might be cast away in the place whence the

latrous priests, whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense in the high places in the cities of Judah, and in the places round about Jerusalem; them also that burnt incense unto Baal, to the sun, and to the moon, and to the planets, and to all the host of heaven. And he brought 6
out the grove from the house of the LORD, without Jerusalem, unto the brook Kidron, and burnt it at the brook Kidron, and stampt *it* small to powder, and cast the powder thereof upon the graves of the children of the people. And 7

first step was taken which had led to idolatry among the people of the Lord.

5. *the idolatrous priests*] The Hebrew has a special name (*Chemarim*) for these priests, and the most generally accepted derivation of the word is from a root meaning 'black', which may have been the colour of the robes used by these priests, though we are never told of black-robed priests in the Old Testament. In Hosea x. 5 the name is applied to the priests of the calves, and we may almost be certain that these were in dress made to look as much like those in the temple at Jerusalem as possible. The only other place where the name is found is Zeph. i. 4 where the words also refer to this false worship in Judah. The Syriac cognate word is used in the N. Test. for the ordinary Jewish priests, so that perhaps some notion of ministerial solemnity, rather than the mere idea of colour, is attached to the name.

whom the kings of Judah had ordained] The use of *Chemarim* in Hosea x. 5 for the priests of the calves might lead to the supposition that the ordination here spoken of was an introduction of calf-worship into Judah. We have however no definite statement that this was ever done. Perhaps as *Chemarim* had become the name of the irregular priests in Israel, who offered to Jehovah but before the calves, the term came into use for all such priests as served at the high places in the way mentioned 2 Chron. xxxiii. 17 'The people did sacrifice still in the high places, yet unto the Lord their God only'.

6. *without Jerusalem, unto the brook Kidron*] So that nothing of the polluting idol might remain, even in its destruction, within the holy city. On the brook Kidron, and its connexion with the destruction of other idols, see note on 1 Kings xv. 13.

upon the graves of the children of the people] R.V. **of the common people**. The A.V. renders the same words thus in Jer. xxvi. 23. Those who could not afford to have graves cut out of the rocks and made secure by a stone at the entrance, were laid in the ground at some distance from the city. The reason for desiring a grave in the rock was lest the prowling wild beasts, which were not uncommon in the land, might disturb the dead bodies. The Chronicler (2 Chron. xxxiv. 4) says the dust was strewn 'on the graves of them that had sacrificed' unto the idols. This would imply that a special burying-

he brake down the houses of the sodomites, that *were* by the house of the LORD, where the women wove hangings
8 for the grove. And he brought all the priests out of the cities of Judah, and defiled the high places where the priests had burnt incense, from Geba to Beer-sheba, and brake down the high places of the gates that *were in* the entering

place had been made for those who had adopted the idolatries that had been introduced; a thing which is very improbable.

7. *And he brake down*] On like reforms cf. 1 Kings xv. 12; xxii. 46.

by [R.V. **in**] *the house of the Lord*] The text says that these abominations were *in* the temple. There is no reason why the English should not represent it plainly.

the women wove hangings for the grove] R.V. **the Asherah.** It seems that at some of the shrines dedicated to the false gods, instead of more permanent erections, tents were put up, and it was for these that the women were employed in weaving curtains. The Hebrew word rendered 'hangings' is the same which is used in other passages for 'houses' of the high places. The Jewish tradition explains it by 'curtains'. Some have thought that the 'tabernacles' alluded to in Amos v. 26 were of this character, tent-like erections which could be moved when not in use. Another allusion to such curtained structures for idolatrous worship is found in Ezek. xvi. 16. 'Of thy garments thou didst take and deckedst thy high places with divers colours'.

8. *all the priests out of the cities of Judah*] These were the priests who had betaken themselves to the various high places throughout the land, and conducted the worship there (2 Chron. xxxiii. 17). These services were offered 'to the Lord their God only'. But such forbidden places Josiah destroyed and defiled their sites so that they should never be restored. The priests were brought to Jerusalem and were hereafter employed on lower duties as Levites.

from Geba to Beer-sheba] That is, throughout all Judah just as 'from Dan to Beersheba' is used (Jud. xx. 1; 1 Sam. iii. 20) for the whole land of Canaan. *Geba* was in the northern border of the tribe of Benjamin. It is probably the same as *Gibeah* which is spoken of in Jud. xx. 31: *Beersheba* was in the extreme south of Judah. We know from Amos viii. 14 that a 'manner' (R.V. **way**) of idolatrous worship prevailed there.

the high places of the gates] The open spaces kept about the gates of Oriental cities afforded exactly the site which would be chosen for some shrine of the popular worship, especially when the kings, Manasseh and Amon, had given their strong support to idolatry. It would be thought to harmonize with the royal wishes if an altar were erected close to the place where the king's public judgement-seat was wont to be.

in [R.V. **at**] *the entering in*, &c.] As the English of both A.V. and R.V. stands, 'the gate of Joshua the governor of the city' must be the

in of the gate of Joshua the governor of the city, which *were* on a man's left hand at the gate of the city. Nevertheless 9
the priests of the high places came not up to the altar of the LORD in Jerusalem, but they did eat of the unleavened bread among their brethren. And he defiled Topheth, 10
which *is* in the valley of the children of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter to pass through the fire to Molech. And he took away the horses that the 11
kings of Judah had given to the sun, at the entering in of the house of the LORD, by the chamber of Nathan-melech

same which is called in the next clause 'the gate of the city'. In that case, as the text speaks of 'high places', we must understand that there was more than one 'high place' in the same neighbourhood. But as they are called 'high places of the *gates*' it has seemed necessary to some to render the words as if a conjunction were omitted, 'The high places of the *gates*, that which was in the entering in of the *gate* of Joshua...and also that which was...at the *gate* of the city'. Thus the two localities would be different. As 'the gate of Joshua' is mentioned nowhere else, we cannot say where it was, or whether a gate so described could also be called 'a gate of the city'. It seems more probable that it was some inner gate, near the governor's official residence.

9. *came not up to the altar of the Lord*] They had been ministers of the high places, which even if they were erected in the name of the Lord, the God of Israel, were yet forbidden, and so these priests henceforth executed no sacrificial office at the temple. They had their support from the offerings made there, but were a class apart and would continue so till they were all passed away. The defect in their practice was held to disqualify them, as physical defects disqualified men from becoming priests.

the unleavened bread] Mentioned as representing those gifts which, after being offered, were devoted to the maintenance of the priests.

among their brethren] i.e. This whole class lived a life distinct from the other priests, being deposed and as it were degraded from their higher office.

10. *Topheth*] See note on xxi. 6, and on 'passing through the fire to Molech' see note on xvi. 3.

11. *the horses that the kings of Judah had given to the sun*] The course of the sun has been in many languages compared to the careering of a chariot drawn through the sky. Hence when men began to adore the heavenly bodies, it was natural to dedicate a triumphal car to the sun-god and to keep splendid horses for use in the procession in his honour. Such had been provided in Judah during the days of Manasseh and Amon, and were still kept close to the entrance of the temple court.

by the chamber of Nathan-melech the chamberlain] Nothing more is known of this man. It may be that he was in attendance on the horses of the sun.

the chamberlain, which *was* in the suburbs, and burnt the
12 chariots of the sun with fire. And the altars that *were* on
the top of the upper chamber of Ahaz, which the kings of
Judah had made, and the altars which Manasseh had made
in the two courts of the house of the LORD, did the king
beat down, and brake *them* down from thence, and cast the
13 dust of them into the brook Kidron. And the high places
that *were* before Jerusalem, which *were* on the right hand of
the mount of corruption, which Solomon the king of Israel
had builded for Ashtoreth the abomination of the Zidonians,
and for Chemosh the abomination of the Moabites, and for
Milcom the abomination of the children of Ammon, did the

which was *in the suburbs* [**precincts**] *and* [R.V. adds **he**] *burnt*] The word, written here *Parvar* is most probably the same as *Parbar* in 1 Chron. xxvi. 18, where the word occurs twice. The most accepted signification is 'an open portico' into which the chambers of the official persons opened. This must have been somewhere outside the temple building, and is fairly represented by 'precincts'.

12. *the altars that* were *on the top* [R.V. **roof**] *of the upper chamber of Ahaz*] This chamber must also have been erected on some of the buildings (perhaps over a gateway), by which the temple was encircled. It was evidently intended for the worship of the host of heaven. Altars on the roof are mentioned in Zeph. i. 5, and there it is expressly said that they were erected for this worship. Cf. also Jer. xix. 13 and xxxii. 29. The worship of the heavenly host was therefore introduced into Judah as early as Ahaz's time.

the altars which Manasseh had made] See above xxi. 4, 5.

did the king beat down [R.V. **break**], *and brake* [R.V. **beat**] them *down from thence*] The former verb is rendered 'break down' in verses 7, 8 and 15, and that being rendered here consistently, the second verb must be translated differently. It will be seen from the margin both of A.V. and R.V. that the latter may also be rendered 'he ran', and this, which is a very well-supported translation, expresses the haste and eagerness manifested to complete the work of destruction.

13. *the mount of corruption*] This name was given to a portion of the Mount of Olives, because of the idolatrous temples which were erected there. It is called in the Vulgate rendering of this verse 'Mons offensionis', and so the hill is spoken of in Christian writings as 'the Mount of Offence'. The word rendered 'corruption' is also often translated 'destruction' (see marg.), and this name is equally applicable, from the ruinous and destructive results which developed out of this introduction of idolatry by Solomon.

Ashtoreth] On *Ashtoreth*, *Chemosh* and *Milcom*, and the temples which Solomon built for them under the influence of his heathen wives, see the notes on 1 Kings xi. 4—8.

king defile. And he brake in pieces the images, and cut 14
down the groves, and filled their places *with* the bones of men.

Moreover the altar that *was* at Beth-el, *and* the high place 15
which Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, had made, both that altar and the high place he brake down, and burnt the high place, *and* stampt *it* small to powder, and burnt the grove. And as Josiah turned himself, he spied 16
the sepulchres that *were* there in the mount, and sent, and

14. *he brake in pieces the images* [R.V. **pillars**], *and cut down the groves*] R.V. **the Asherim.** From such passages as this we may conclude that the images of Asherah were generally of wood.

bones of men] To the mind of a Jew, trained by the Law to consider the touch of a dead body to be defilement (Num. v. 2) a place defiled in this manner could never again be used for any religious purpose, and we may feel sure that the people would not have shaken off this feeling though they had begun to worship idols.

15—20. JOSIAH DESTROYS THE HIGH PLACE AT BETH-EL, AND DEFILES THE ALTAR. HE FINDS THE TOMB OF THE MAN OF GOD WHO HAD FORETOLD ALL THESE THINGS. HE ALSO SLAYS THE PRIESTS AT BETH-EL. (Not in Chronicles.)

the altar that was *at Beth-el*] i.e. which Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, had erected when the ten tribes revolted from Rehoboam (1 Kings xii. 28, 29). Having purged his own kingdom from idolatry he now turns his thoughts to those Israelites who were left in the northern kingdom. The Chronicler, who omits the history of Israel almost entirely, probably omits the striking incident noticed in these verses because it was not connected directly with Judah. He does tell of the collection of money from Manasseh, Ephraim and the remnant of Israel (2 Chron. xxxiv. 8) at this time, but this was for the restoration of the temple in Jerusalem and so came properly within his subject.

both [R.V. **even**] *that altar and the high place*] The 'high place' means here, and often in other passages, 'the house of the high place', which was some sort of chapel near to the spot where the altar stood.

and [R.V. adds **he**] *burnt the high place.....and burnt the grove*] R.V. **Asherah.** As from the cutting down (verse 14), so here from the burning we learn that the Asherim were wooden even if they were overlaid with metal.

16. *Josiah turned himself*] i.e. To view the overthrow and to satisfy himself that all had been thoroughly destroyed. The king was zealous in the work, and personally superintended what he wished to have done.

he spied the sepulchres] Not close by where the altar and the high place had stood, but on some other hill, which was visible from where the king was standing.

took the bones out of the sepulchres, and burnt *them* upon the altar, and polluted it, according to the word of the LORD which the man of God proclaimed, who proclaimed these
17 words. Then he said, What title *is* that that I see? And the men of the city told him, *It is* the sepulchre of the man of God, which came from Judah, and proclaimed these things that thou hast done against the altar of Beth-el.
18 And he said, Let him alone; let no man move his bones. So they let his bones alone, with the bones of the prophet
19 that came out of Samaria. And all the houses also of the high places that *were* in the cities of Samaria, which the

burnt them *upon the altar, and polluted* [R.V. **defiled**] *it*] The change is for consistency. We have the verb translated 'defile' in verses 8, 10 and 13.

according to the word of the Lord] For the history here referred to see 1 Kings xiii. 2.

these words] R.V. **things**. This is the translation in the very next verse.

17. *What title* [R.V. **monument**] is *that that* [R.V. **which**] *I see?*] The word is used in Jer. xxxi. 21 for 'way marks' to guide along a road, and in Ezek. xxxix. 15 for a 'sign' to mark a spot where lay some object needing notice. So that 'monument' appears the better rendering, especially as in the reply the people do not speak to Josiah of a 'title' but of a 'sepulchre'.

the sepulchre of the man of God] The prophet of Bethel who had deceived him, brought the carcase of the dead man back to Bethel and buried it (1 Kings xiii. 29—31) in what must at that time have been a general burial-ground, and on which Jeroboam would never have built his altar.

18. *Let him alone*] R.V. **Let him be.** The verb translated 'let alone', in a later clause of the verse is not the same as this. Hence the change in the English.

that came out of Samaria] i.e. The prophet of Bethel, for that place belonged to what was afterwards known as the kingdom of Samaria. The word 'Samaria' is used here in accordance with the language of Josiah's day. Samaria did not exist in Jeroboam's time, the city which ultimately gave name to the district having only been built in the reign of Omri (1 Kings xvi. 24).

19. *high places that* were *in the cities of Samaria*] It would seem from this that when the ten tribes had been carried away the king of Judah exercised some sort of authority over the people in the northern kingdom. But the high places in Samaria were most likely the places in which purely heathen idolatry was practised. They therefore differed from the high places in Judah, and to their priests Josiah was more severe than to the Levitical priests who had conducted the wor-

kings of Israel had made to provoke *the* LORD to anger, Josiah took away, and did to them according to all the acts that he had done in Beth-el. And he slew all the priests of 20
the high places that *were* there upon the altars, and burnt men's bones upon them, and returned *to* Jerusalem.

And the king commanded all the people, saying, Keep 21
the passover unto the LORD your God, as it is written in the book of this covenant. Surely there was not holden 22

ship of Jehovah on the high places in his own kingdom. The injunction to slay idolaters is found in Deut. xvii. 2—5.

20. *and burnt men's bones upon them*] To the heathen, as well as to the Jew, this would be a pollution that would make the place for ever unfit for worship.

21—30. HE PUTS DOWN SUPERSTITIOUS RITES AND WORSHIP. HE IS SLAIN AT MEGIDDO WHEN HE GOES AGAINST THE KING OF EGYPT. (2 Chron. xxxv. 1—27; xxxvi. 1.)

21. *Keep the passover*] The Chronicler gives elaborate details concerning the way in which this feast was kept to shew that all the arrangements commanded by the Law were most exactly observed. On the fourteenth day of the first month, the Levites had special injunctions given to them about the purification of themselves, and the doing of all things according to the word of the Lord by the hand of Moses. The king himself gave the victims, lambs and kids, for the passover offering, from his own substance, and the liberality of priests and Levites was also large. The passover was killed, roasted, divided speedily and eaten according to the prescribed rules. The whole aim of the record is to shew that whatever may have been left undone in times past, everything was now brought into harmony with the primitive ordinance. The Chronicler also mentions by name the rulers of the house of God and the chief of the Levites, as though copying from a contemporary record to which others might refer as well as himself.

in the book of this covenant] R. V. **in this book of the covenant.** The king desires that whatever may have come to be the manner of celebration from long usage, and the neglect which had been introduced through the sins of the kings, there should now be a precise observance of everything which the authoritative book, recently brought to light, required. It is clear from such a passage as 2 Kings xvi. 15 that the regular observance of the sacrificial ordinances had fallen into disuse.

22. *Surely there was not holden* [R. V. **kept**] *such a passover*] The same change is also required in the next verse. The king had said '*Keep* the passover'.

This verse cannot be tortured into the meaning which some have put upon it, that the passover had been wholly neglected since the days of the Judges, or as the Chronicler puts it, 'the days of Samuel the prophet',

such a passover from the days of the judges that judged Israel, nor *in* all the days of the kings of Israel, nor of the
23 kings of Judah; but in the eighteenth year of king Josiah, *wherein* this passover was holden to the LORD in Jerusalem.
24 Moreover the *workers with* familiar spirits, and the wizards, and the images, and the idols, and all the abominations

and through all the reigns of the previous kings of Judah, with the exception of the one recorded passover of Hezekiah. That the passovers are not mentioned comes about because they were a part of the life of the nation, which went on its natural round as a matter of course. That there was a relaxation in portions of the observance we can have no doubt, but that passovers ceased is as little to be accepted as that there was no observance of the great day of atonement because we do not read of it in the books of Samuel or Kings. It is not possible to believe that provision should have been regularly made for placing the ark of the covenant in a separate room, and that Solomon should have made the elaborate arrangements which he did for the Most holy place, and yet that there should have been no regard paid to the one solemn service for which alone the ark and the Holy of Holies were provided. Both the passover and the day of atonement were observed, though there were times when insufficient regard was paid to the required ceremonial. The passover of Josiah however went back to the complete form ordained in this book of the covenant, and in that respect was remarkable above all those which had been held since the days of Joshua and the elders that outlived Joshua, after which days (Judges ii. 10) 'there arose another generation' and the people fell away, and the ceremonial law was but partially observed, and never so strictly through all that period as in this great passover of king Josiah.

23. *in the eighteenth year of king Josiah*, wherein [R.V. **was**] *this passover was holden*] R.V. **this passover kept**. There is no need for the italics of A.V. The writer wishes to say emphatically *when* this strict observance of the passover took place. The writer of the Kings has never mentioned the passover of Hezekiah, but it is noteworthy that the Chronicler, though he has given the account of Hezekiah's feast, yet, equally with the compiler of this book, says that no such passover as Josiah's had been held before since Samuel's days. This shews clearly that his meaning was that no passover-feast had gone so strictly according to the book of the covenant.

24. *Moreover the* workers with [R.V. **them that had**] *familiar spirits, and the wizards*] See note on xxi. 6. Josiah now proceeds to exterminate all the superstitious practices which grow up side by side with idolatry.

and the images] R.V. **the teraphim**. These were a sort of household gods, and some charm or virtue seems to have been ascribed to the possession of them. Hence Rachel stole *the teraphim* (Gen. xxxi. 19) when she was leaving her father's home. Micah made *teraphim* for his house in Mount Ephraim (Judges xvii. 5), and it was

that were spied in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, did Josiah put away, that he might perform the words of the law which were written in the book that Hilkiah the priest found *in* the house of the LORD. And like unto him was 25
there no king before him, that turned to the LORD with all

the teraphim which Michal, Saul's daughter, hid in the bed, to make believe that David was sick, and thus give him time to escape.

that he might perform (R.V. **confirm**) *the words of the law*] The change is as in verse 3. What Josiah desired was not only to carry out on this occasion the prescription of the Law, but so to establish the observance that it should continue and not be lightly modified. There is no mention of the passover held in the nineteenth year and in the succeeding years of Josiah's reign. It would be rash, however, to conclude from such absence of the record, that the same solemnity was not used every succeeding year of the king's reign, almost as rash as to decide that the passover had been unobserved since the time of Samuel.

The ordinances for putting down them that had familiar spirits and other like superstitions are found in Lev. xix. 31; xx. 6, 27.

25. *no king before him*] For before the kingdom was established the religious strictness of the people had greatly degenerated, and even the best rulers never were so solemnly recalled to the legal regulations as Josiah was by the discovery of the temple-copy of the Law. The next verse makes it clear why there was no such good king after Josiah. The evil doings of Manasseh had corrupted the nation past redemption. The reforms of Josiah lasted not nearly so long.

'The evil that men do lives after them:
The good is oft interred with their bones.'

We have now come to the last mention of the book which was found in the temple and of its influence. From the allusions to its contents we can see that it must have contained such threatenings against neglect of the Law as are found in Deuteronomy; such injunctions for the putting down of idolatry and its attendant superstitions as we have now in Deuteronomy and Leviticus, and such ordinances concerning the observance of the passover as are found in Exodus and in Numbers. Without saying therefore that the book was in the form which we now possess (for that probably underwent revision in the days of Ezra and even later), yet there was in it that which represented for that time the same code and regulations as we have now in the books of Moses, from which it is seen that the portions read by Josiah and Shaphan were substantially derived. It is to be supposed that modifications would be here and there introduced into the regulations, both for civil and religious observances, according to the changed circumstances of the people. But these would only be made by persons acting in the spirit of the great lawgiver, and endued with zeal for God's service as he was, and therefore everything thus included would continue to be called, as it continued to be in spirit, the law of Moses.

his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; neither after him arose
26 there *any* like him. Notwithstanding the LORD turned not from the fierceness of his great wrath, where*with* his anger was kindled against Judah, because of all the provocations
27 that Manasseh had provoked him withal. And the LORD said, I will remove Judah also out of my sight, as I have removed Israel, and will cast off this city Jerusalem which I have chosen, and the house of which I said, My name shall
28 be there. Now the rest of the acts of Josiah, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of
29 the kings of Judah? In his days Pharaoh-nechoh king of Egypt went up against the king of Assyria to the river Euphrates: and king Josiah went against him; and he slew
30 him at Megiddo, when he had seen him. And his servants

27. *and will cast off this city Jerusalem which I have chosen*] R.V. **this city which I have chosen, even Jerusalem.** This rendering preserves the order of the Hebrew. More than this cannot be said in its favour.

29. *Pharaoh-nechoh*] R.V. **necoh.** He is stated to have been the 5th or 6th king of the Saïte XXVIth dynasty. His expedition against the king of Assyria was B.C. 610. He probably came from Egypt by sea and landed on the coast of Palestine. Otherwise Josiah would have chosen some place further south than Megiddo to meet him. From his conduct we may conclude that Josiah at this time was in alliance with, or perhaps tributary to, Assyria. The destination of the Egyptian expedition (according to the Chronicler) was Carchemish on the Euphrates, and he relates the very considerate message which the Egyptian king sent to Josiah, 'What have I to do with thee, thou king of Judah? I come not against thee this day but against the house wherewith I have war. For God commanded me to make haste: forbear thee from meddling with God, who is with me, that He destroy thee not.'

and king Josiah went against him] In Chronicles we read that Josiah 'disguised himself, that he might fight with the king of Egypt, and hearkened not unto the words of Nechoh from the mouth of God.' The claim to be divinely directed in the expedition is singular in the mouth of an Egyptian king. The language is not, however, of the same kind as that which Rab-shakeh used, when he asserted that the Lord (Jehovah) had sent him (2 Kings xviii. 25). There may have been such a faith in a single Divine Being among the Egyptians that Nechoh could employ the word God (Elohim) in speaking thereof. Whatever the king's belief, and in spite of the overthrow of Josiah, the Egyptian expedition against Assyria was unsuccessful in the end.

at Megiddo] On this city, and its position and military importance,

carried him *in a chariot* dead from Megiddo, and brought him *to* Jerusalem, and buried him in his own sepulchre. And the people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah, and anointed him, and made him king in his father's stead.

Jehoahaz *was* twenty and three years old when he *began* to reign; and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. And 31
his mother's name *was* Hamutal, the daughter of Jeremiah

see notes on ix. 28. In 2 Chronicles it is said, 'the archers shot at king Josiah, and the king said to his servants, Have me away, for I am sore wounded'.

30. *carried him* in a chariot] The italics are wrong as also in ix. 28. The verb signifies 'to carry in a chariot'. The R.V. prints in common type. According to the Chronicler, they moved him from his war chariot into a second chariot which he had at hand. From Zech. xii. 11 'As the mourning of Hadad-Rimmon in the valley of Megiddo' it has been supposed that Josiah did not die till he reached Hadad-Rimmon, and that the mourning there mentioned by the prophet was for this good king's death. The Chronicler dwells at length on the sorrow which this event caused. 'Jeremiah lamented for him, and all the singing men and singing women spake of Josiah in their lamentations unto this day'. Some have thought that the lamentation here spoken of is preserved to us in the poem contained in Lam. iv. But there is hardly anything in it which can be taken as clear allusion to this time. Jeremiah's dirge for Josiah has probably perished with much other literature of the period.

Jehoahaz...and anointed him] To anoint a king who succeeded in the ordinary way was not usual. Hence some have thought that the people of the land were not acting according to what Josiah himself would have wished, nor choosing the recognised successor in passing over the elder brother. They wished therefore, by this solemn rite, to ensure his acceptance as their religiously consecrated monarch.

It appears from the history in Kings that Eliakim (Jehoiakim) was older than Jehoahaz, because on Eliakim's succession he is stated to have been 25 years old, while Jehoahaz, whose reign was only of three months' duration, is said to have been 23 when he came to the throne (2 Kings xxiii. 31 and 36). But in the genealogy (1 Chron. iii. 15) the sons of Josiah are put down as 'the firstborn Johanan (and this the margin of A.V. identifies with Jehoahaz), the second Jehoiakim, the third Zedekiah, the fourth Shallum'. If the margin of A.V. is correct then Jehoahaz would have succeeded in his proper place. But he is called Shallum in Jer. xxii. 11, and so he would be, according to the Chronicler, the fourth son.

31—35. REIGN OF JEHOAHAZ. HE IS PUT DOWN BY THE KING OF EGYPT. JEHOIAKIM IS MADE KING, AND BECOMES TRIBUTARY TO EGYPT. (2 Chron. xxxvi. 1—4.)

31. *his mother's name* was *Hamutal*] So he was by the same

32 of Libnah. And he did *that* which *was* evil in the sight
of the LORD, according to all that his fathers had done.
33 And Pharaoh-nechoh put him in bands at Riblah in the
land of Hamath, that *he* might not reign in Jerusalem; and
put the land to a tribute of an hundred talents of silver, and
34 a talent of gold. And Pharaoh-nechoh made Eliakim the
son of Josiah king in the room of Josiah his father, and
turned his name *to* Jehoiakim, and took Jehoahaz *away:*
35 and he came *to* Egypt, and died there. And Jehoiakim
gave the silver and the gold to Pharaoh; but he taxed the
land to give the money according to the commandment of
Pharaoh: he exacted the silver and the gold of the people
of the land, of every one according to his taxation, to give
it unto Pharaoh-nechoh.

mother as well as by the same father as Zedekiah. See xxiv. 18. On *Libnah*, see above viii. 22.

33. *put him in bands at Riblah in the land of Hamath*] In 2 Chron. xxxvi. 3 it is said 'the king of Egypt put Jehoahaz down at Jerusalem'. We cannot, however, be sure that this implies an advance by Pharaoh-nechoh upon the holy city. However, the appointment which the people had made was clearly not acceptable to the Egyptian king, and Jehoahaz was carried away to the point which Pharaoh had reached in his march from Carchemish, and there put in bonds.

Riblah] (called also *Riblathah*) was a city on the Orontes, and on the road which led from Palestine to Babylon. It is afterwards mentioned as the place at which Nebuchadnezzar tarried during the reduction of Jerusalem (xxv. 20, 21) and whither the captives were brought to him.

tribute of an hundred talents] On the value of these sums, see above on v. 5.

34. *Eliakim...and turned his name* to *Jehoiakim*] We can hardly think that this change was made by Pharaoh. He probably insisted on a change of name, but allowed the new king to suggest what it should be. So the change was made from *El* (God) *iakim* (will establish), to *Jeho* (i.e. Jehovah) will establish. On the custom of changing the names of subject persons and slaves, cf. the change of Joseph's name in Egypt (Gen. xli. 45, also chap. xxiv. 17 below). To these may be added the changes mentioned in the book of Daniel (Dan. i. 7).

and [R.V. **but he**] *took Jehoahaz* away] i.e. From Riblah, and carried him with him prisoner into Egypt, where he died. On his death see Jer. xxii. 11, 12.

35. *he exacted the silver and the gold of the people of the land*] The king did not undertake to pay, as had been done aforetime (cf. xvi. 8; xviii. 15) this tax out of any treasures in the house of the Lord,

Jehoiakim *was* twenty and five years old when he *began* 36
to reign; and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And
his mother's name *was* Zebudah, the daughter of Pedaiah
of Rumah. And he did *that* which *was* evil in the sight of 37
the LORD, according to all that his fathers had done. In 24
his days Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up, and
Jehoiakim became his servant three years: then he turned
and rebelled against him. And the LORD sent against him 2

or of the king's house. In those troublous days there was likely to be but little in store, so a tax was laid on the whole people.

XXIII. 36—XXIV. 7. JEHOIAKIM KING OF JUDAH. NEBUCHADNEZZAR MAKES HIM TRIBUTARY. HIS MANY ADVERSARIES. JEHOIACHIN, HIS SON, SUCCEEDS HIM. (2 Chron. xxxvi. 5—8.)

36. *His mother's name* was *Zebudah*] R.V. **Zebidah.** The R.V. follows the spelling of the *Kethib*. The name *Rumah*, the native place of Zebidah, is not mentioned elsewhere. It has been conjectured that it is the same as Dumah (ד and ר being in Hebrew writing most easily interchanged). Dumah (Josh. xv. 52) was in the hill country of Judah, near Hebron, from which neighbourhood (*viz.* Libnah) another of Josiah's wives came. The R at the beginning is however represented by the LXX., which has Ῥουμά.

XXIV. **1.** *Nebuchadnezzar...came up*] We learn from Jeremiah (xlvi. 2) that Pharaoh-nechoh was defeated by Nebuchadnezzar at the Euphrates near Carchemish in the fourth year of Jehoiakim. The Egyptian king had probably left his army at Carchemish on his own return to Egypt. After routing the Egyptian force the king of Babylon came forward to attack those lands which had submitted to Pharaoh, Judah among the rest.

Nebuchadnezzar was the son and successor of Nabopolassar, who founded the Babylonian Empire. It was while Nebuchadnezzar was engaged in this expedition against the Egyptians and their allies that he was recalled to take the throne of Babylon. He had been acting as general for his father, though to the Jewish mind he would appear as king of Babylon, especially as he so soon after became in reality king and was made known to them as such by terrible experience.

Jehoiakim became his servant three years] i.e. He undertook to pay a certain yearly tribute to Babylon. The conqueror appears also to have carried off captives from Jerusalem, for it was at this time that Daniel and his companions were taken away (Dan. i. 1). It would seem from the history in 2 Chron. xxxvi. 6 that Nebuchadnezzar's intention had been to take Jehoiakim away, for it is stated that he 'bound him in fetters to carry him to Babylon'. See on this also the language of Ezek. xix. 9. But by some means he was maintained on his throne. After three years of vassalage, however, he rebelled, probably thinking that he could get help from Egypt.

bands of the Chaldees, and bands of the Syrians, and bands of the Moabites, and bands of the children of Ammon, and sent them against Judah to destroy it, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by his servants the pro-
3 phets. Surely at the commandment of the LORD came *this* upon Judah, to remove *them* out of his sight, for the sins of
4 Manasseh, according to all that he did; and also *for* the innocent blood that he shed: for he filled Jerusalem *with*
5 innocent blood; which the LORD would not pardon. Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim, and all that he did, *are*

2. *And the Lord sent against him bands of the Chaldees*] R.V. **Chaldæans.** The bands were irregular marauding parties which were allowed, perhaps encouraged, to overrun the country of the rebellious vassal before the great king could put his trained force in motion. These marauders did not consist only of Babylonians (Chaldæans) but comprised also bodies from the surrounding people, Syria, Moab and Ammon, whom Nebuchadnezzar had compelled to acknowledge the supremacy of Babylon in the same way as Judah had done. On this mixed army of assailants cf. Jer. xxv. 9.

according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by [R.V. **by the hand of**] *his servants the prophets*] Much more stress is laid in Kings on the judgement being Jehovah's work than in Chronicles. '*The Lord* sent the bands', they came 'according to the *Lord's word*' and 'at *His* commandment'. The prophets had been predicting judgements to come ever since the days of Ahaz, when Isaiah prophesied. Jeremiah says, in the chapter just quoted (xxv. 3), that his own appeals had been long and unavailing. A special prophecy of Isaiah concerning these events is found above (2 Kings xx. 17).

3. *for the sins of Manasseh*] See above ch. xxiii. 26. The fifty-five years of Manasseh's rule sealed the nation's fate.

4. *which* [R.V. **and**] *the Lord would not pardon*] The example, set for so long a time, had so penetrated the national character, that Jehovah, who multiplies His pardon (Is. lv. 7), could bear with the transgressions no longer. We gather from Chronicles that Jehoiakim did evil like his predecessors. His abominations that he did, and that which was found in him (probably meaning, the evil found in his ways), were written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah.

5. *the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim*] One of the most conspicuous acts of Jehoiakim's impiety was the burning of Jeremiah's roll of prophecies (Jer. xxxvi.), and the way in which evil-doing had made men callous is expressed in the prophet's narrative: 'Yet they were not afraid nor rent their garments, neither the king nor any of his servants'. So the prophecy of the Lord against Jehoiakim was, 'He shall have none to sit upon the throne of David'. In another place Jeremiah foretells (xxii. 18—19) the fate which shall befall him. 'They shall not lament for him...he shall be buried with the burial of an ass, drawn and cast forth

they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? So Jehoiakim slept with his fathers: and Jehoia- 6
chin his son reigned in his stead. And the king of Egypt 7
came not again any more out of his land: for the king of Babylon had taken from the river of Egypt unto the river Euphrates all that pertained to the king of Egypt.

Jehoiachin *was* eighteen years old when he *began* to reign, 8
and he reigned in Jerusalem three months. And his mother's name *was* Nehushta, the daughter of Elnathan of Jerusalem. And he did *that* which *was* evil in the sight of 9

beyond the gates of Jerusalem'. And in another passage, 'His dead body shall be cast out in the day to the heat and in the night to the frost'. The evil and self-indulgent character of Jehoiakim is abundantly set forth in Jeremiah xxii. 11—17.

6. *Jehoiakim slept with his fathers*] How the violent death which the prophet foretold came about the history makes no record. Whether he fell in fight with the numberless invaders, or, as seems suggested by the form of the prophecies quoted in the previous note, was slain by his own subjects and his body cast forth from the city we cannot decide. No mention is made of any burial.

7. *the king of Egypt came not again any more*] The whole Asiatic possessions of Egypt had been conquered by the Babylonians, who now become the prominent heathen people in the Scripture story.

from the river [R.V. **brook**] *of Egypt*] This is not the Nile, but the modern *Wadi El Arish*, a desert stream toward the border of Egypt. See note on 1 Kings viii. 65 for its identification.

8—17. Reign of Jehoiachin. Capture of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. Plunder and captives carried away: Zedekiah made king of Judah. (2 Chron. xxxvi. 9—10.)

8. *Jehoiachin* was *eighteen years old*] The Chronicler says *eight*. The letter which is required to make the difference is the smallest in the Hebrew alphabet, and may easily have fallen out by a slip of the copyist. That 'eighteen' is the correct number may be concluded because (see verse 15) Jehoiachin had *wives*, which would hardly be the case at *eight*. To the 'three months' of the king's reign here set down, the Chronicler adds 'and ten days', probably having before him a precise record. Though after the last reign we come no more upon quotations from the chronicles of the kings of Israel and Judah. Jehoiachin is called *Jeconiah* in Jer. xxiv. 1, and *Coniah* in Jer. xxii. 24, 28. For the double form compare *Oshea* and *Jehoshua* (Numb. xiii. 16).

Elnathan of Jerusalem] Almost certainly the same person who is called 'Elnathan the son of Achbor' (Jer. xxvi. 22) and who was sent by Jehoiakim with a party of men into Egypt to fetch thence Urijah the prophet, whom Jehoiakim caused to be put to death. The name

10 the LORD, according to all that his father had done. At
that time the servants of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon
11 came up *against* Jerusalem, and the city was besieged. And
Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came against the city, and
12 his servants *did* besiege it. And Jehoiachin the king of
Judah went out to the king of Babylon, he, and his mother,
and his servants, and his princes, and his officers: and the
king of Babylon took him in the eighth year of his reign.
13 And he carried out thence all the treasures of the house of
the LORD, and the treasures of the king's house, and cut in

also occurs among the princes in the account of Jeremiah's roll (Jer. xxxvi. 12, 25). He was one of those who made intercession with the king not to burn it.

10. *the servants of Nebuchadnezzar...came up* against [R.V. **to**] *Jerusalem*] There is no preposition in the Hebrew, only the accusative of direction. On 'servants' see note on v. 13.

11. *Nebuchadnezzar came against* [R.V. **unto**] *the city, and his servants* did *besiege* [R.V. **were besieging**] *it*] Here a preposition is expressed, and the latter clause of the verse indicates that the siege had begun before Nebuchadnezzar came thither in person.

12. *Jehoiachin...went out to the king of Babylon*] He did as Rab-shakeh invited the people to do on a former occasion (xviii. 31) 'Come out to me.' This was to submit himself to Nebuchadnezzar, and in the hope of making an impression on the Babylonian king, Jehoiachin goes, taking with him the queen-mother, and all his chief men. On the influential position occupied in many Eastern states by the queen-mother, see note on 1 Kings ii. 19.

in the eighth year of his reign] i.e. Of Nebuchadnezzar's reign. We know from Jeremiah (xxv. 1) that the fourth year of Jehoiakim was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar. So the time just admits of the three months' reign of Jehoiachin, as his father reigned eleven years (xxiii. 36). In connexion with this captivity should be read the prophecy of Jeremiah xxiv. where under the type of good and bad figs, he speaks of the fate of the two sorts of people, those that are sent into the land of the Chaldæans for their good, and the rest, who like Zedekiah inclined to a league with Egypt. To this time belongs also Jeremiah's letter to the captives, full of wise advice and comforting promises (Jer. xxix. 1—23).

13. *And he carried out thence all the treasures of the house of the Lord*] According to the Chronicler (2 Chron. xxxvi. 7) some of the vessels of the house of the Lord had been taken to Babylon in the reign of Jehoiakim. With this agrees the notice in Daniel (i. 2) where we are told that the vessels were put by Nebuchadnezzar 'into the house of his god', or as the Chronicler records 'into his temple at Babylon'.

and cut in pieces all the vessels of gold which Solomon...had made] We know from Ezra i. 7—11 that Cyrus gave back to the Jews after

pieces all the vessels of gold which Solomon king of Israel had made in the temple of the LORD, as the LORD had said.
And he carried away all Jerusalem, and all the princes, and 14
all the mighty *men* of valour, *even* ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and smiths: none remained, save the poorest sort of the people of the land. And he carried 15
away Jehoiachin to Babylon, and the king's mother, and the king's wives, and his officers, and the mighty of the land, *those* carried he *into* captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon.
And all the men of might, *even* seven thousand, and crafts- 16
men and smiths a thousand, all *that were* strong *and* apt for war, even them the king of Babylon brought captive to Babylon. And the king of Babylon made Mattaniah his 17

the captivity 5400 vessels of gold and silver. We must suppose that the larger portion of these had been taken away at first. This second plundering of the temple appears to have been conducted with much more violence than the former. The verb translated here 'cut in pieces' is rendered 'cut off' in the account of Hezekiah's stripping the gold from the temple doors (xviii. 16), and before that (xvi. 17) of Ahaz 'cutting off' the borders of the bases. So that here we are probably to understand that Nebuchadnezzar stripped all that was overlaid with gold. That there was a large quantity of gold so used by Solomon we see from the account in 1 Kings vi.

as the Lord had said] Formerly to Hezekiah after his ostentation (xx. 17).

14. *he carried away all Jerusalem*] The policy of Nebuchadnezzar was to remove out of the way all those who might be able to organize and plan a revolt when he and his army had departed. Hence all the people of rank, of wealth, and of skill as handicraftsmen are deported, and only the poorest folk left, who had neither knowledge nor means for doing more than work of drudgery. The total number of captives was 10,000. In verse 16 the numbers of some classes are specified, the 'men of might' were 7000, and the craftsmen 1000, which leaves 2000 for the royal household and their retainers, and the princes and the others who are spoken of in the general phrase as 'strong and apt for war'. Such men it would have been dangerous to leave behind. In this captivity the prophet Ezekiel was included. See Ezekiel i. 3.

17. *Mattaniah*] He was the brother of Jehoiakim, and as we gather from 1 Chron. iii. 15, he was Josiah's third son. He is wrongly called 'the brother' of Jehoiachin, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 10, unless we accept the word translated 'brother' for some general term of relationship and render it 'kinsman'. Thus Lot is called Abraham's *brother*, Gen. xiv. 16 and Bethuel also in Gen. xxiv. 48. So also in 2 Kings x. 13 'the *brethren* of Ahaziah were not all that king's *brothers*'. On the changing of names of persons taken captive or placed in some position of subjection see note on xxiii. 34.

father's brother king in his stead, and changed his name *to* Zedekiah.

18 Zedekiah *was* twenty and one years old when he *began* to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Hamutal, the daughter of Jeremiah of
19 Libnah. And he did *that* which *was* evil in the sight of
20 the LORD, according to all that Jehoiakim had done. For through the anger of the LORD it came to pass in Jerusalem and Judah, until he had cast them out from his presence,
25 that Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon. And

Zedekiah] Both this name and *Mattaniah* have *Jah* = Jehovah for their termination. We may therefore suppose that the choice of his new name was left to the Jewish king. *Mattan-jah* = gift of Jehovah; *Zedek-jah*, righteousness of Jehovah.

XXIV. 18—XXV. 7. ZEDEKIAH KING OF JUDAH. HE REBELS AGAINST NEBUCHADNEZZAR. JERUSALEM TAKEN. ZEDEKIAH PUT TO DEATH. (2 Chron. xxxvi. 11—21; Jeremiah lii. 1—11.)

18. *Hamutal*] See xxiii. 31.

19. *according to all that Jehoiakim had done*] For Jehoiakim's character, see above on verse 5.

20. *For through the anger of the Lord it came* [**did it come**] *to pass*] Still the same language as in xxiii. 27 and in xxi. 12—14, and all pointing to the evil practices of Manasseh and his times. The picture in 2 Chronicles xxxvi. 14—16, sets before us the way in which the evil doings had corrupted all classes. 'The chief of the priests and the people transgressed very much after all the abominations of the heathen and polluted the house of the Lord. And the Lord God of their fathers sent to them by His messengers, rising up betimes and sending, because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling-place. But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised His words, and misused His prophets until the wrath of the Lord arose against His people, till there was no remedy'. God was deemed to be specially present in the temple at Jerusalem, hence the captivity was a removal from His sight.

that [R.V. **and**] *Zedekiah rebelled*] It is better to translate the conjunction as the mere copulative, putting a strong stop after 'presence'. There were several stages in Zedekiah's progress to complete revolt. The Chronicler (2 Chron. xxxvi. 12) says that Nebuchadnezzar had made the new king swear unto him by God, perhaps thinking such an oath would be more binding than if he sware by any other oath. We know (Jerem. xxix. 3) that Zedekiah sent an embassy to the king of Babylon, apparently with the desire of getting back the captives who had been taken away with Jeconiah. If this were really his wish it did not succeed, and thus the wish to revolt may have arisen. A little

it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, in the tenth *day* of the month, *that* Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came, he, and all his host, against Jerusalem, and pitched against it; and they built forts against it round about. And the city was besieged unto the eleventh 2

later Zedekiah went himself in the company of Seraiah (Jer. li. 59) to Babylon. This was in the fourth year of his reign. Amid all these communications with the conqueror, we learn (Jer. xxvii. 3) that messengers came to Jerusalem from the kings of Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre and Sidon, who all seemed anxious to form a league against Babylon. Zedekiah listened to false prophets like Hananiah (Jer. xxviii. 1—4), who told him that the yoke of the king of Babylon was to be broken and the captives all to be brought back, and along with them the vessels of the house of the Lord. Disappointed of his petitions, and encouraged by the kings round about him, and by the smooth things he heard at home, Zedekiah revolted, probably refusing to pay the yearly tribute and sending (Ezek. xvii. 15) down to Egypt to obtain help in horses and chariots. Presently afterwards the Babylonian armies came once more against Jerusalem.

XXV. **1.** *in the ninth year of his reign*] i.e. Of Zedekiah's reign. How long before this, the neglect to pay the tribute, which was the usual indication of disaffection, had gone on we are not told. The Babylonian power might overlook the first omission, but perhaps not the second. So we may date the determination to revolt from about the seventh year of Zedekiah's reign. Thus time would be given for such preparations as in the weak condition of the land he could make.

and pitched [R.V. **encamped**] *against it*] The verb is one of constant occurrence in the descriptions of the marches of the Israelites from Egypt. There 'to pitch' is a very suitable word, but the Babylonian armies did not intend to move till the city of Jerusalem was taken. So 'encamp', the general term for such a military 'pitching' of tents, seems preferable.

built forts] To the precise character of these erections the word gives no clue by its derivation. It is always used for works built *against* a city by the attacking party. Hence we must suppose some line of enclosure to be intended, or erections from which the besiegers could with greater effect discharge missiles over the walls.

2. *unto the eleventh year*] The natural strength of the position of Jerusalem must have been very considerable, for such a rabble as remained to be able to hold out nearly two years against the forces of Babylon. We know however (Jer. xxxiv. 7) that Nebuchadnezzar's troops were engaged at the same time in attacking Lachish and Azekah. So that a part only of his soldiers were employed against Jerusalem. We find too (Jer. xxxvii. 5, 11) that, on the report that the army of Pharaoh was coming forth out of Egypt, the siege of Jerusalem was so far relaxed that Jeremiah undertook to leave the city and depart into the land of Benjamin but was stopped at the gate by Irijah.

3 year of king Zedekiah. And on the ninth *day* of the *fourth* month the famine prevailed in the city, and there was no
4 bread for the people of the land. And the city was broken up, and all the men of war *fled* by night *by* the way of the gate between two walls, which *is* by the king's garden: (now the Chaldees *were* against the city round about:) and *the*
5 *king* went the way toward the plain. And the army of the Chaldees pursued after the king, and overtook him in the plains of Jericho: and all his army were scattered from him.

3. *And on the ninth* day *of the* fourth *month*] The words in italic omitted here by the scribe, can be filled up from Jer. xxxix. 2; lii. 6.

the famine prevailed] R.V. **was sore.** The verb is that which is found used of famine in Gen. xli. 56, 57, though we have a different word for a *sore* famine in xliii. 1. The rendering of R.V. is from A.V. in Jer. xxxix. 6.

4. *And the city was broken up*] R.V. **Then a breach was made in the city.** The old phrase 'broken up' was the same in sense as 'broken through'. See 2 Chron. xxiv. 7; Jer. xxxix. 7; Micah ii. 13; Matth. xxiv. 43; Mark ii. 4.

We have a more full account of the events here alluded to in Jer. xxxix. 2—7. There we learn that when the breach had been made the princes of the king of Babylon came in and sat in the middle gate, and when Zedekiah saw them he and his men of war fled.

the men of war fled *by night*] The verb is supplied, but appears in the text of Jer. xxxix. 4; lii. 7. The scribe in this passage has been much at fault.

by *the way of the gate between two* [R.V. **the two**] *walls*] This was a definite locality. The A.V. translates as R.V. in Jerem. xxxix. From its proximity to the king's garden, this gate must be the same which is called in Neh. ii. 14; iii. 15, 'the gate of the fountain'. It was close to the pool of Siloam, and so the way through it would lead down to the Kidron valley.

which is [R.V. **was**] *by the king's garden*] The past tense suits the narrative and its date better. Whether the king's garden was outside or within the walls does not appear.

and the king *went the way* [R.V. **by the way**] *toward the plain*] R.V. **of the Arabah.** See note on xiv. 25. The whole valley from the sea of Galilee southward to the desert was called by this name. On the character of this flight compare the words of Ezek. xii. 12.

5. *And* [R.V. **But**] *the army of the Chaldees*] R.V. **Chaldeans.** This change in the name of the people of Babylon is made in every place through the chapter. As the troops were all round the city there was very little chance for the king to get away. In his flight he was making for the Jordan, thinking pursuit to be more difficult in the mountainous region on the east of the river. But he was overtaken in the plains of Jericho, before the river was reached.

So they took the king, and brought him up to the king of 6
Babylon to Riblah; and they gave judgement upon him.
And they slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, and put 7
out the eyes of Zedekiah, and bound him with fetters of
brass, and carried him *to* Babylon.

And in the fifth month, on the seventh *day* of the month, 8

6. *So* [R.V. **Then**] *they took the king, and brought him up to* [R.V. **unto**] *the king of Babylon*] Nebuchadnezzar was stationed at some distance, and was awaiting the issue of the campaign. The verb rendered 'take' implies seizure as a prisoner. It is used before (x. 14) '*Take them* alive'.

to Riblah] See on xxiii. 33.

and they gave judgement upon him] Jer. xxxix. 5 says, '*He* gave judgement upon him'. No doubt the proceeding was of this kind. The king appointed a committee to try Zedekiah, and when they had given their sentence, Nebuchadnezzar commanded it to be carried into effect.

7. *slew the sons of Zedekiah*] This was done to prevent the rise of a new revolt under a successor. To do it in the sight of the father was to break down all his hope of any rightful successor taking his throne. The narrative in Jeremiah adds that Nebuchadnezzar 'slew all the nobles of Judah'. Not only was the royal family destroyed, but the men of power and influence were all extinguished.

put out the eyes of Zedekiah] This punishment the Philistines inflicted on Samson (Jud. xvi. 21) before they put him in the prison-house. The LXX. had this instance so much in mind that they say Zedekiah was put εἰς οἰκίαν μύλωνος. The deprivation of the eyes was not uncommon in the East as a punishment (cf. Herod. VII. 18).

It is very striking to put side by side the two prophecies concerning Zedekiah uttered the one by Jeremiah, the other by Ezekiel. The former said (xxxiv. 3) 'Thine eyes shall behold the eyes of the king of Babylon, and he shall speak with thee mouth to mouth, and thou shalt go to Babylon (cf. Jer. xxxii. 4); the latter (xii. 13) says of this king 'I will bring him to Babylon to the land of the Chaldæans, yet shall he not see it though he shall die there'.

and bound him with fetters of brass] R.V. **in fetters.** There is no need to express the metal of which the fetters were made. In English on the contrary we speak of 'putting a man in *irons*' and omit 'fetters'. The Hebrew word is dual, and properly signifies 'double fetters'. His legs as well as his hands were shackled.

and carried him to Babylon] The narrative in Jeremiah adds 'and put him in prison till the day of his death'.

8—21. BURNING OF JERUSALEM, THE TEMPLE, AND ALL THE CHIEF BUILDINGS. MORE CAPTIVES TAKEN. THE BRASS WORK OF THE TEMPLE CARRIED OFF. CAPTIVES SLAIN AT RIBLAH. (2 Chron. xxxvi. 17—29; Jeremiah lii. 12—29.)

8. *on the seventh* day] Jeremiah says *the tenth day*. The slight

which *is* the nineteenth year of king Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, came Nebuzar-adan, captain of the guard, a servant
9 of the king of Babylon, *unto* Jerusalem: and he burnt the house of the LORD, and the king's house, and all the houses of Jerusalem, and every great *man's* house burnt he with fire.
10 And all the army of the Chaldees, that *were with* the captain of the guard, brake down the walls of Jerusalem round about.
11 Now the rest of the people that were left in the city, and the fugitives that fell away to the king of Babylon, with the remnant of the multitude, did Nebuzar-adan the captain of

differences in numbers are easily accounted for when we remember that the Hebrews marked their numbers by letters, and that there is great similarity between many of the letters of their alphabet.

Nebuzar-adan, captain [R.V. **the captain**] *of the guard*] The title 'captain of the guard', literally 'chief of the slaughterers', is found in Gen. xxxvii. 36 and frequently afterwards in that book. Then only in 2 Kings xxv. and in Jeremiah xxxix. and following chapters, all relating to the Babylonian captivity. Probably this officer was at first the executioner, and the name was retained after the duties had been delegated. We find in 1 Kings ii. 25, 35, 46, Benaiah the captain of Solomon's host acting as the executioner of Adonijah, Joab and Shimei.

This officer Nebuzar-adan was sent by Nebuchadnezzar to take charge of all that was done after Jerusalem had been actually taken. His behaviour to Jeremiah was of the most generous character, and appears to have been guided by the directions of the king of Babylon. (Cf. Jer. xl. 4 with xxxix. 11—12.) We hear of another visit of Nebuzar-adan to Jerusalem in the 23rd year of Nebuchadnezzar (Jer. lii. 30), when he carried off 745 additional captives with him to Babylon.

9. *every great* man's *house burnt he with fire*] R.V. omits 'man's'. The expression in 2 Chronicles is 'he burnt all the palaces thereof with fire'.

11. *Now the rest* [R.V. **And the residue**] *of the people*] The change is in accordance with Jer. lii. 15 where the same people are spoken of.

and the fugitives that fell away to the king of Babylon] R.V. **and those that fell away, that fell to the king of Babylon.** This alteration is also from A.V. in the parallel passage just referred to, where the Hebrew is the same as here.

with the remnant [R.V. **residue**] *of the multitude*] Also R.V. adds **captive** after 'carry away' at the close of the verse. Thus the two parallel and nearly identical passages are brought as closely into agreement in the English as they are in the original.

Nebuzar-adan took the residue of the better sort, both those who still were faithful to their country and those who had gone over to the Babylonian side, and the residue of the common folks, who were likely

the guard carry away. But the captain of the guard left of 12
the poor of the land to be vinedressers and husbandmen.
And the pillars of brass that *were in* the house of the LORD, 13
and the bases, and the brasen sea that *was* in the house of
the LORD, did the Chaldees break *in pieces*, and carried the
brass of them to Babylon. And the pots, and the shovels, 14
and the snuffers, and the spoons, and all the vessels of brass
wherewith they ministered, took they *away*. And the fire- 15
pans, and the bowls, *and* such *things* as *were of* gold, *in*
gold, and *of* silver, *in* silver, the captain of the guard took
away. The two pillars, one sea, and the bases which Solo- 16
mon had made for the house of the LORD; the brass of all
these vessels was without weight. The height of the one 17
pillar *was* eighteen cubits, and the chapiter upon it *was*
brass: and the height of the chapiter three cubits; and the
wreathen work, and pomegranates upon the chapiter round

to prove useful in some settlement or other, and carried both these classes with him.

12. *left of the poor* [R.V. **poorest**] *of the land*] The word was so rendered above in xxiv. 14. Now that the great houses and their inhabitants were gone and the craftsmen also, the life became no better than that of the nomads, and the people left behind could only turn to keeping the land in cultivation. Jeremiah (xxxix. 10) calls them 'the poor of the people, which had nothing'.

13. *and the pillars of brass*] These were the pillars, Jachin and Boaz, the two masterpieces of Hiram mentioned in 1 Kings vii. 15. Their position was not within the house, but in the porch (see 1 Kings vii. 21 and all the notes there).

and the bases] See 1 Kings vii. 27. These were richly wrought stands to support the lavers used in the sacrificial services.

and the brasen sea that was [R.V. **were**] *in the house of the Lord*] On the brasen sea, see 1 Kings vii. 23. Both the bases and the sea were within the inner court.

15. *and the bowls*] R.V. **basons.** All these vessels are enumerated among the things provided for the temple services in the account of Solomon's temple referred to above.

and *such* things *as* were of *gold* in *gold, and* of *silver* in *silver*] R.V. **that which was of gold, in gold, and that which was of silver, in silver.** The R.V. has here conformed to the A.V. in Jer. lii. 19, where the original is the same.

16. *the brass...was without weight*] This is said before in the account of their casting, 1 Kings vii. 47.

17. *and the chapiter upon it* was *brass*] R.V. **and a chapiter of brass was upon it.** The sentence is not meant to state of what material the chapiter was, but that it was there on the top of the pillar.

about, all *of* brass: and like unto these had the second pillar
18 with wreathen work. And the captain of the guard took
Seraiah the chief priest, and Zephaniah the second priest,
19 and the three keepers of the door: and out of the city he
took an officer that was set over the men of war, and five
men of them that were in the king's presence, which were
found in the city, and the principal scribe of the host, which
mustered the people of the land, and threescore men of the
20 people of the land that were found in the city: and Nebuzar-
adan captain of the guard took these, and brought them
21 to the king of Babylon to Riblah: and the king of Babylon
smote them, and slew them at Riblah in the land of Hamath.
So Judah was carried away out of their land.

wreathen work] R.V. **network.** Twice over the change is needed in this verse, to correspond with the rendering of A.V. in 1 Kings vii. 18, 20, 41, 42.

18. *Seraiah, the chief priest*] Probably the son of Azariah and grandson of Hilkiah (1 Chron. vi. 14). His name is not found except in the parallel narratives.

Zephaniah the second priest] This was the son of Maaseiah (Jer. xxi. 1). He was the successor in office of Jehoiada (Jer. xxix. 25, 26). The particulars known of his history are that he was asked by Shemaiah the Nehelamite (Jer. xxix. 29) to punish Jeremiah as if he were a false prophet. Zephaniah was also sent on two occasions to Jeremiah, once to ask the result of the siege, and secondly, to beg the prophet to intercede for the people (Jer. xxvii. 3).

On 'second priest' see note on xxiii. 4 above.

the three keepers of the door] These were the three Levites stationed one at each chief entrance to the temple.

19. *five men of them that were in the king's presence*] R.V. **that saw the king's face.** For the expression, cf. Esther i. 14. The officer over the men of war, and the five persons admitted to closest intimacy with the king, together with the scribe, represented the remaining conspicuous persons in the city: Seraiah and the others were prominent among the servants of the temple.

principal scribe of the host] R.V. **the scribe, the captain of the host.** This was the chief military secretary, Secretary at War. Some would render 'the scribe of the captain of the host,' and suggest that his superior officer had been already taken away, or had fled.

threescore men of the people of the land] These, though undefined, had made themselves obnoxious in some way or other; else they would not have been taken and put to death among the distinguished people named before them.

21. *and slew them* [R.V. **put them to death**] *at Riblah*] The word is not the same as in verse 7, and the R.V. follows A.V. of Jer. lii. 27.

So Judah was carried away out of their [R.V. **his**] *land*] The A.V.

And *as for* the people that remained in the land of Judah, 22
whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had left, even over
them he made Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of
Shaphan, ruler. And when all the captains of the armies, 23
they and *their* men, heard that the king of Babylon had
made Gedaliah governor, there came to Gedaliah *to* Mizpah,
even Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and Johanan the son of

has 'his own' in Jer. lii. Jeremiah gives the totals of this captivity thus. In the seventh year of Nebuchadnezzar 3023, in the eighteenth year 832, and in the three-and-twentieth year 745, making a total of 4600. Jer. lii. 28—30.

22—26. GEDALIAH IS MADE GOVERNOR OF THE PEOPLE REMAINING IN JERUSALEM. HE IS SLAIN, AND THE PEOPLE FLEE TO EGYPT. (Not in Chronicles. Cf. Jeremiah, chaps. xl. and xli.)

22. *And* as for *the people that remained*] R.V. **were left.** The change is in accordance with A.V. in verse 11 above.

made Gedaliah...ruler] R.V. **governor.** This man was of a conspicuous family, and is described by Josephus (*Ant.* x. 9. 1—3) as a man gentle and just. His father Ahikam had influence enough in the evil days of Jehoiakim to be able to protect and save the life of Jeremiah (Jer. xxvi. 24). His grandfather Shaphan was one of the great personages in the court of Josiah. Beyond what is related in these verses, little is known of Gedaliah, though the history of his brief rule is somewhat expanded by Jeremiah in the two chapters xl. and xli.

The change of rendering is in conformity with A.V. in Jer. xl. 7, and with the verse 23 next following.

23. *And* [R.V. **Now**] *when all the captains...heard*] The governorship of Gedaliah appears to have found much favour. We are told (Jer. xli.) that when Jeremiah was set at liberty by Nebuzar-adan at Ramah he at once made his way to Gedaliah; beside that the captains of the forces gathered to him, and so did the Jews that had escaped into the countries round about, Moab, Ammon and Edom; and it is said 'they gathered wine and summer fruits very much'. Meantime Gedaliah was warned that Baalis the king of the Ammonites had sent Ishmael to slay him, but he refused to credit the report, and when one of his friends voluntered to slay Ishmael, Gedaliah would not permit it.

captains of the armies] R.V. **forces.** Thus translated in Jer. xl. 7.

to *Mizpah*] See on 1 Kings xv. 22. Jerusalem was now in ruins. Mizpah was a strong place about six miles north of the Holy City.

Ishmael the son of Nethaniah] Jeremiah xli. 1 (see also below verse 25) adds that Nethaniah was the son of Elishama of the seed royal. How he was connected with the royal blood we cannot discover. He had been in the country of the Ammonites during the destruction of Jerusalem, and when Gedaliah was set up as governor in Mizpah he came into Judah, apparently at the instigation of Baalis, king of Ammon, with the purpose of slaying Gedaliah and occupying his place.

Careah, and Seraiah the son of Tanhumeth the Netophathite, and Jaazaniah the son of a Maachathite, they and
24 their men. And Gedaliah sware to them, and to their men, and said unto them, Fear not to be the servants of the Chaldees: dwell in the land, and serve the king of Babylon;
25 and it shall be well with you. But it came to pass in the seventh month, *that* Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, the son

At first he acted as if friendly to Gedaliah, but after a short time, at a banquet where he and ten friends were entertained by Gedaliah, the murder of the governor was perpetrated, and at the same time all the Jews in the house with Gedaliah were likewise slain. All this was done with such precaution and secrecy that for two days nobody outside the governor's palace knew what had been done. After that time Ishmael, observing a party of fourscore pilgrims coming towards Mizpah, went to meet them, and bringing them into the courtyard of the house as if to see Gedaliah, had all but ten of them killed and cast into the well in the court. He now resolved on flight and taking away with him the daughters of Zedekiah, who had been put under Gedaliah's charge, he turned his steps to the land of Ammon. But Johanan and the other captains, who had by this time discovered the atrocious murders, pursued Ishmael, yet though they came up with him and his party 'by the great waters that were in Gibeon', and though Ishmael's followers were at once ready to desert him, the villain, and eight more with him, escaped into the country of the Ammonites.

Johanan the son of Careah] R.V. **Kareah.** This is the spelling of A.V. in Jeremiah xl. 8; xli. 11, &c. It was Johanan who warned Gedaliah of the plot against him. He is mentioned (Jer. xliii. 2—4) as one of those who were prominent in the proceedings when Jeremiah was carried off into Egypt. He is there classed among 'all the proud men'. A brother of his, Jonathan, is mentioned in Jer. xl. 8.

Seraiah the son of Tanhumeth] He is called here the Netophathite, but in the enumeration of Jeremiah that description is omitted, and some other persons are described as 'the sons of Ephai, the Netophathite'.

Jaazaniah the son of a [R.V. **the**] *Maachathite*] The name is spelt *Jezaniah* in Jeremiah's narrative.

24. *Gedaliah sware to them*] He gave them a most solemn promise that they should enjoy the security which he expected under the rule of the Chaldæans.

Fear not to be [R.V. **because of**] *the servants of the Chaldees*] R.V. **Chaldæans.** The alarm of the returning fugitives would be lest another Chaldæan force should come and do to Mizpah as they had done to Jerusalem.

25. *in the seventh month*] Jerusalem was overthrown in the fifth month (see above verse 8), so that but two months had elapsed, and

of Elishama, of the seed royal, came, and ten men with him, and smote Gedaliah, that he died, and the Jews and the Chaldees that were with him at Mizpah. And all the 26
people, both small and great, and the captains of the armies, arose, and came *to* Egypt: for they were afraid of the Chaldees.

And it came to pass in the seven and thirtieth year of the 27
captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the seven and twentieth *day* of the month, *that* Evil-merodach king of Babylon, in the year that he *began* to reign, did lift up the head of Jehoiachin king of Judah out of prison; and he spake kindly to him, and set his throne 28

Gedaliah's influence had begun, even in that brief period, to inspire much confidence.

that he died, and the Jews and the Chaldees [R. V. **Chaldæans**] *that were with him*] See above on verse 23.

26. *all the people...and the captains of the armies* [R.V. **forces**] *arose and came* to *Egypt*] Feeling now sure that there would be reason to fear because of the servants of the Chaldæans. They were in a panic, and fled away in spite of the exhortations of Jeremiah, and they carried Jeremiah with them into Egypt (Jerem. xliii. 1—7). On their arrival at Tahpanhes and on the prophetic action of Jeremiah there, read Jer. xliii. 8—13. Other Jewish settlements in Egypt mentioned by the prophet (xliv. 1) are Migdol, Noph and the country of Pathros.

27—30. JEHOIACHIN KING OF JUDAH KINDLY TREATED BY EVIL-MERODACH KING OF BABYLON. (Jer. lii. 31—34.)

27. *the seven and thirtieth year of the captivity of Jehoiachin*] Thus twenty-six years had elapsed since Jerusalem was overthrown.

on the seven and twentieth day *of the month*] In Jeremiah it is put down as the five-and-twentieth. That the year, month and day are so carefully noted (for the variation is easily understood) shews that the captive Jews regarded the act of Evil-merodach as a gleam of hope for all the nation.

Evil-merodach king of Babylon] He was the son and successor of Nebuchadnezzar. Coming to the throne B.C. 561, he ruled for two years till B.C. 559, and then was murdered by his brother-in-law, Neriglissar, who thus made himself king of Babylon.

did lift up the head of Jehoiachin] For the expression, signifying 'to shew favour to', compare Gen. xl. 13, 20, where Pharaoh in a similar manner is said to have 'lifted up the head' of his chief butler, when he released him from prison and restored him to his post.

28. *and set his throne above the throne*, &c.] i.e. He gave him precedence, perhaps by causing him to sit at the table in a place nearer to himself, and also by manifesting special regard for him. That other kings were in the same condition as Jehoiachin, and had been brought

above the throne of the kings that *were* with him in Babylon,
29 and changed his prison garments: and he did eat bread
30 continually before him all the days of his life. And his allowance was a continual allowance given him of the king, a daily rate for every day, all the days of his life.

to Babylon because they were troublesome in their own countries, we can see from this verse. Some however were imprisoned, as Jehoiachin had been, while others were at liberty but confined to Babylon and the court.

29. *And changed* [R.V. **he changed**] *his prison garments*] For the subject is Jehoiachin, not Evil-merodach. So R.V. omits 'he' in the next clause.

did eat bread continually before him] R.V. **before him continually**. i.e. He himself was a constant guest at the royal table.

30. *And his* [R.V. **for his**] *allowance*] i.e. He was assigned a regular amount in money or in kind for the keeping of such attendants as a captive king might be supposed to require.

a daily rate for every day] R.V. **every day a portion**. This is the A.V. rendering in Jerem. lii. 34, where the history says 'until the day of his death all the days of his life', an emphatic mode of expressing that the king's mind did not change, nor was the arrangement altered by Evil-merodach's successor.

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